

Necrophilic fantasy, decay, and death

Illustrating horror in Edgar Allan Poe

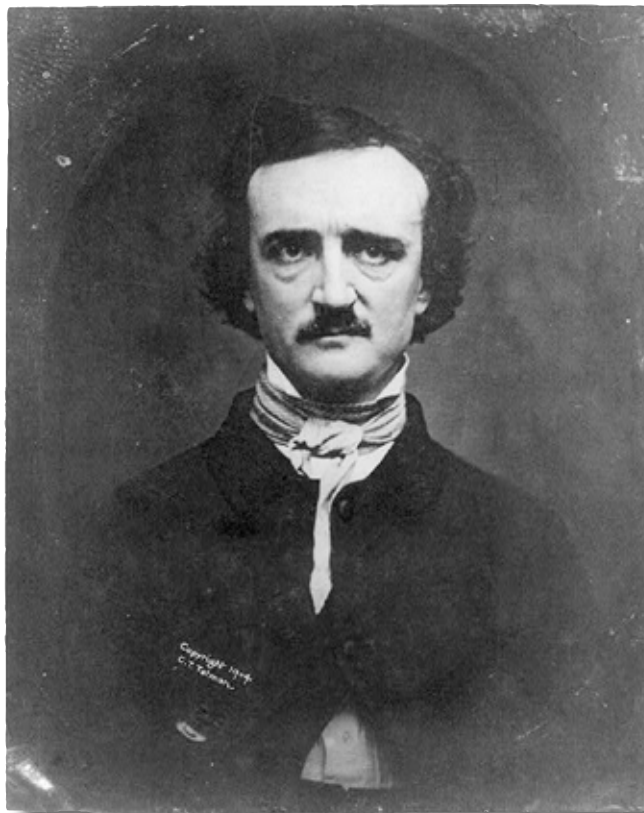
Jerry D. Meyer

I have admired the work of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) [fig. 1] since I was in my early teens. But it was not his sophisticated turn of phrase or his intricate – sometimes labored – use of vocabulary, but his ability to conjure up a delightfully terrifying story that first attracted me. As a high schooler, I was not critiquing his genius as a writer of Gothic tales and love-lorn poetry; I was reacting to the wonderfully inventive images that Poe was able to conjure up in my young mind.

Each generation of kids grows up exposed to various concepts of death, ghosts, and like spooky things. Back in the 1940s and early fifties when I was a pre-pubescent boy living in the far reaches of Southern Illinois, this primarily meant radio dramas like *Inner Sanctum Mysteries*, with its creaking door and sardonic host, Raymond, preparing the listener for a delightfully ghoulish tale; or an occasional scary movie in the local town theater. To my dismay, we did not have a television in my home until the late 1950s. This was as close to child abuse as my dear parents ever came.

When I was young, I was not shielded from the reality of death. Families in the small farming communities where most of my kindred lived still abided by the tradition of open caskets displayed in the home when a loved one died. I was five years old in 1945 when my maternal grandfather died. Before burial, his casket, surrounded by sweet-smelling white lilies, was displayed in the living

room of the extremely modest, four-room family farmhouse near tiny Boaz, Illinois. It was mid-summer (air conditioning was not an option then) and my grandfather's face was protected from insects by a curtain of sheer silk hanging from the open casket lid. I distinctly remember my grieving grandmother lifting the silk to kiss my grandfather's brow. Meanwhile, my cousins and I played among the constant stream of visitors to the house,



[FIG. 1] Daguerreotype of Poe, 1848, Library of Congress image.

running in and out of the screen doors on to the front porch and into the yard.

When I was about ten, I recall visiting some of these same cousins at their white frame home on a dusty country road not too far from my grandparents' farm. We hiked up a nearby hill to the humble house of some distant relatives whose dilapidated farm included an old, ill-kept, small family

graveyard. There were no fancy tombstones, just small boulders as markers, some pine trees (symbols of eternal life), and a falling-down fence. A cousin my age told me of her recent experience walking across one of the graves and having it sink in. The bodies had been buried in simple wooden (probably hand-made) boxes that had rotted over time. Ah, shades of Poe's horrific tales, such as *The Premature Burial* [fig. 2]. For me, this was a wonderful, real-life story in the tradition of Edgar Allan Poe.

My English teachers were the ones, of course, who first taught me that Poe was an important American author. In ninth grade, my first high school English teacher, Miss Bach, a wonderful teacher, introduced us to American poetry by reading, in a sing-song voice, a portion of Poe's *The Bells*, the poem's imagery captured by English artist William Heath Robinson (1872-1944) in his turn-of-the-century drawing [fig. 3]:

What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
 How it swells!
 How it dwells
 On the Future! – how it tells
 Of the rapture that impels
 To the swinging and the ringing
 Of the bells, bells, bells! –
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells –
 To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

We had been forewarned of this “right-of-passage” event in junior high and anticipated the occasion with bated breath (whatever that means). Miss Bach threw herself seriously into the effort, and we appropriately hid our amusement. Later, I would much prefer the better-known Poe poem *The Raven*. And soon, my interest in Poe would extend beyond just wonderfully written passages.

As a budding artist in high school, I also became interested in the many individuals who, over the years, were inspired to illustrate Poe's work. That, incidentally, will be
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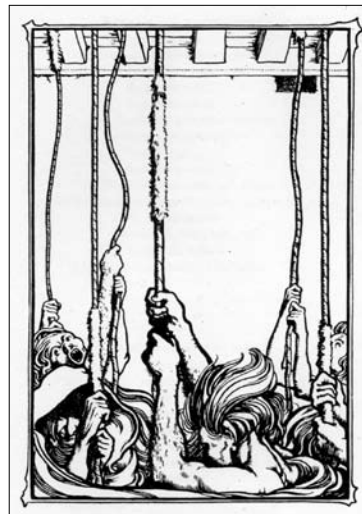
Michael Gorman

POE ILLUSTRATORS, from page 1

the primary focus of this article, and I will liberally punctuate observations about Poe and his writings with artwork by some of his better-known and as well as not-so-well-known illustrators. This taste of Poe, however, must necessarily be a *tapas* portion.

Poe's life was filled with frequent, sometimes horrific, misery, and this is mirrored in much of his work. He seemed to live and die in tangent with many of the tragic characters that peopled his writings. The intertwining of unconsummated love and untimely death is an ongoing *leitmotif* that makes so much of his poetry and prose both fascinating and sometimes loathsome, particularly when the body of the presumed departed, usually a beautiful but fragile woman, insists on making an unexpected curtain call [figs. 4 & 5].

And, indeed, death stalked Poe's extended family from the time he was two and a half years of age. Both his young mother Eliza and father David were dead before Edgar reached the age of three, his mother from slow and debilitating tuberculosis, known in the nineteenth century by its more familiar and descriptive name "consumption." This disease, indeed, seemed to consume the body over time. Edgar's foster mother, Frances (Fanny) Allan, whom he came to love like

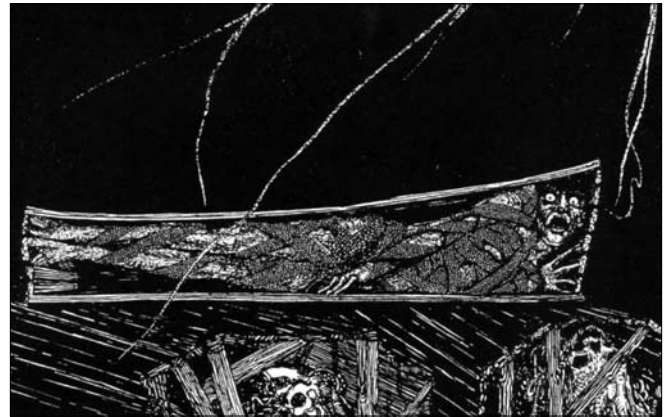


[FIG. 3] Heath Robinson, illustration for *The Bells*, 1900.

his natural mother, died when he was 20, and the relationship he had with his foster father, John Allan, deteriorated tragically thereafter. At the time of Fanny Allan's death, Poe was serving in the army and was

granted leave to travel home. But Fanny had already been buried when he arrived; and, according to contemporary accounts, the distraught Poe threw himself on her fresh churchyard grave.¹ In 1831 the impoverished Poe, now 22, established living arrangements with his dead father's widowed sister, Maria Clemm, and her nine-year-old daughter, Virginia, Poe's cousin. He fell in love with Virginia

and married her in 1836 when she was just shy of 14 years of age. They seemed, sincerely, to care for each other, but most scholars doubt that the marriage was ever actually consummated. The beautiful but oh so delicate Virginia developed consumption by the age of 16 and experienced a long but inevitable decline. One of Poe's many biographers, Marie Bonaparte,



[FIG. 2, DETAIL] Harry Clarke, illustration for *The Premature Burial*, 1919 and later.

has suggested that "the reeking scarlet background" of Poe's tale, *The Masque of the Red Death*, was inspired by Virginia's fateful bloody haemoptysis, signaling – as Poe surely knew – her eventual fate.²

The horror of Poe's tale of eminent death is atmospherically captured by the Indian-born British artist Byam Shaw (1872-1919), and, in a delightfully cartoonish fashion, by one of my favorite contemporary illustrators, Gris Grimly [figs. 6 & 7]. Poe's masterful short story opens with the following passage, indicative of what the disease, consumption, represented to many in the nineteenth century:

The "Red Death" had long devastated the country. No pestilence had ever been so fatal, or so hideous. Blood was its Avatar and its seal – the redness and the horror of blood.

This tale, centered on the revelry of the masque, concludes with the realization that the wealthy partiers have not escaped death, who has revealed himself as one of the masked attendees:

And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death. He had come like a thief in the night. And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall.³

In early 1847, at the age of 24, Virginia finally succumbed to consumption, leaving Poe, again, devastated.

Poe's ill-fated relationship with the women he loved had, as we might expect, a morbid affect on his writing. As he noted in this passage from his essay *The Philosophy of Composition*:

'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the uni-

versal understanding of mankind, is the most melancholy?' Death – was the obvious reply. 'And when,' I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?' ...When it most closely allies itself to *Beauty*: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world...⁴

But Poe's necrophilic obsession was to take him into the more cryptic recesses of unsustainable love and premature death. As he acknowledged in his poem *Introduction*, first published in 1831:

And so, being young and dipt in folly
I fell in love with melancholy,
And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest –
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath –

While he attempted to establish a career as a writer and editor, Poe was never able to secure a financially stable existence. Certainly, some individuals in Poe's own time considered him a genius, but his addiction to alcohol and his tendency to alienate his fellow writers and few friends predictably destroyed his chances of any lasting prosperity and also served to delay the unfettered fame that would only fully arrive in America in the twentieth century.

Poe's health deteriorated following Virginia's death, hastened by drunken binges, periods of hallucinations, and even a short stay in jail. In late September 1849, having traveled to New York City from Richmond, Virginia, Poe drank himself into a stupor at a party, and was found semiconscious on a street

[FIG. 4] Harry Clarke, *Fall of the House of Usher*, 1919 and later.



[FIG. 5] Basic & Sumberac, *Fall of the House of Usher*, 2011.

in Baltimore, Maryland, five days later. He was transported to the mental ward of Washington College Hospital where he remained incoherent. He died October 7, at the age of 40. His last five days before hospitalization remain a mystery and scholars have continued to speculate on what exactly happened to him. In 2012, the ongoing evolution of interest in Poe's strange death resulted in a thriller movie, *The Raven*, starring John Cusack as Poe. The plot, set in 1849, purports to be an account of the last days of the writer's life, in which Poe pursues a serial killer whose murders mirror his cryptic tales.

Poe was buried in the Presbyterian (now Westminster) Cemetery in Baltimore on October 8. But like so many of the unfortunate characters in his tales, his body did not lie undisturbed. As his reputation grew, it was decided in the late nineteenth century to have his body disinterred, examined, and then reburied in a more prominent place with a monument befitting his growing fame. As the church sexton who supervised the writer's unearthing commented, "...Poe will not stay put."⁵

One of the few known photographs of Poe, the so-called "Ultima Thule" daguerreotype taken November 9, 1848, less than a year before his death [fig. 1], has continued to serve as the basis for interpretations of the writer's complex personality.⁶ Poe may still

have been feeling the effects of heavy drinking and a nearly suicidal dose of laudanum consumed a few days earlier. On the day of the photograph, Poe had arrived at the home of Sarah Helen Whitman, a fellow poet with whom he had become infatuated. Poe had earlier asked for her hand in marriage. She initially accepted and then declined (resulting in Poe's overdose of laudanum), accepted again and then declined with finality in December of 1848. Poe's erratic behavior had become too disturbing.

According to Whitman's much later account, Poe had arrived at her home in November,

in a state of wild and delirious excitement, calling upon me to save him from some terrible impending doom.... The tones of his voice were appalling and rang through the house. Never have I heard anything so awful, even to sublimity.⁷

While Whitman's recollections seem overtly romanticized, possibly to coincide with public expectations based on Poe's legendary life (she was, after all a writer), they are consistent enough with other accounts of his erratic behavior to ring largely true. Whatever the truth, the photograph has endured as the basis for much extrapolation in attempts to meld Poe with his work. The image was widely copied by engravers and served as the starting point for numerous caricatures of the writer, such as the wonderfully evocative cover for the June 2006 issue of *Eureka's Graphic Classics* showing the agitated figure of Poe in a graveyard clutching a tombstone [fig. 8].

Scholars have also long noted the similarity of Poe's description of the ill-fated Roderick Usher in his *The Fall of the House of Usher*, to his own distinctive features:

A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond comparison; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely moulded chin, speaking in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten.⁸

See *POE ILLUSTRATORS*, page 4



[FIG. 6] Byam Shaw, *Masque of the Red Death*, from *Poe, Selected Tales of Mystery*, London: Sedgwick & Jackson, Ltd., 1909.

POE ILLUSTRATORS, from page 3

Indeed, Poe certainly considered his own intellectual and artistic abilities superior to those of most of his fellow writers, and he was increasingly bitter that his accomplishments were not appropriately rewarded and his genius thus universally acknowledged.

Relative to deserved recognition, bad luck was to follow Poe to his grave. Poe, who had a love/hate relationship with the Reverend Rufus Wilmot Griswold (also an aspiring writer), unfortunately named him executor of his estate. When Poe died, Maria Clemm gave Griswold the writer's archive of materials, and Griswold was to publish the first of a multi-volume issue of Poe's *oeuvre* beginning in 1850.⁹

Griswold acknowledged that there were brilliant aspects to some of Poe's work, but his overall negative commentary about the writer was to taint public assessment of Poe throughout most of the nineteenth century. In his obituary for the October 9, 1849, issue of the *New York Tribune*, Griswold wrote the following notorious words: "Edgar Allan Poe is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. The announcement will startle many, but few will be grieved by it." Griswold early on established the image of Poe as morally-challenged with a disturbed soul: "He walked the streets in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or eyes upturned in passionate prayers...."¹⁰



[FIG. 7] Gris Grimly, *Mask of the Red Death*, from *Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Mystery and Madness*, London: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

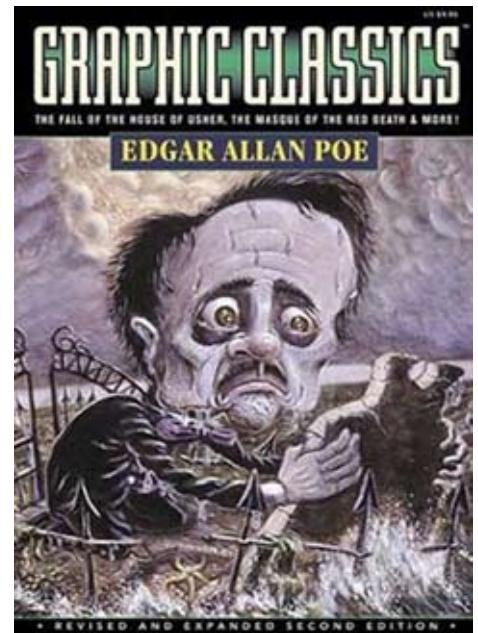
It is ironic that Griswold should label Poe a madman, since Griswold himself was also subject to periods of near hysteria. In an episode very much in the tradition of a Poe tale, Griswold relates that he was so overcome by the death of his wife that he went to the vault where his wife had been interred for 40 days and

...turned aside the drapery that hid her face... I kissed for the last time her cold, black forehead – I cut off locks of her beautiful hair, damp with the death dews, and sunk down in senseless agony beside the ruin of all that was dearest in the world."¹¹

The damage that Griswold did to Poe's reputation was not significantly ameliorated until English-



[FIG. 9] Édouard Manet, *illustration to Poe's The Raven*, 1875.



[FIG. 8] Cover of the June 2006 issue of *Eureka's Graphic Classics*.

man John Henry Ingram published his more objective, two-volume biography of the writer in 1889, based on extensive interviews with those still living who had known Poe.

Ironically, it was in France that Poe's reputation first flourished untainted, due especially to the Symbolists' attraction to his writings. The French were also much less obsessed with perceived moral turpitude than Americans. Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) (of *Les Fleurs du Mal* fame) found in Poe's dark vision of humankind a kindred soul, and, in 1848, began the process of translating and publishing Poe's work in France over the next 16 years. Of his discovery of Poe, Baudelaire wrote:

The first time that I opened one of his books I was shocked and delighted to see not only subjects which I had dreamed of, but SENTENCES which I thought and which he had written twenty years before."¹²

In 1876 Symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) wrote a sonnet in Poe's memory, *Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe*, as part of a memorial volume of his work.

Two of the earliest significant artists to create work inspired by Poe were also French: the Impressionist Édouard Manet (1832-1883) and the Symbolist Odilon Redon (1840-1916). Manet was the only major French Impressionist to design book illustrations that were issued contemporaneously. In 1875 he collaborated with Mallarmé in publishing Poe's *The Raven/Le Corbeau*, producing six large brush drawings

which were translated into lithographs by the printer [fig. 9].¹³ While Manet's illustrations are an interesting episode by a major artist associated with Poe's work, they lack the haunting narrative quality of many future interpretations, for instance those found nearly a decade later in Gustav Doré's much more ambitious folio of images for the same poem [fig. 10].

More akin to Poe's evocation of haunting mystery than Manet's sketches, and solidly aligned with the pictorial language of the French Symbolists, were the prints of Odilon Redon dedicated to the American writer. While Redon did not publish any pictures specifically illustrating any Poe work, he did issue an album of prints entitled *To Edgar Poe* in January of 1882. His print, *A l'horizon, l'ange des certitudes, et, dans le ciel sombre, un regard* from this group [fig. 11], might well, in its disembodied images against velvety blackness, conjure up for the knowledgeable reader aspects of Poe's writings. But Redon said he only intended his inscriptions for these prints to evoke a similar atmosphere. In his book, *Le Art Moderne* (Paris, 1883), Joris Karl Huysman



[FIG. 10] Gustave Doré, illustration to Poe's *The Raven*, 1884.

acknowledged the kindred spirits of Redon, Baudelaire, and Poe when he wrote, "[Redon's work] is really the translation of one art to the other [with] Baudelaire and above all Poe the masters of the artist."¹⁴

Arguably the most popular French illustrator of the later nineteenth century, Gustave Doré (1832-1883), also interpreted Poe. Doré's engravings for the Bible, Cervante's *Don*



[FIG. 11] Odilon Redon, *A l'horizon, l'ange des certitudes, et, dans le ciel sombre, un regard*, plate 3 from the 1882 Album *To Edgar Poe*.

Quixote, and Dante's *Divine Comedy* were highly acclaimed in the 1860s and continue to be reprinted in numerous later editions in Europe and the United States.

Doré was an artistic prodigy who had a story with his illustrations published when he was only 15 years old. In 1883, the year of his death, he completed drawings for 26 full-page steel engravings reproduced in an oversized luxury edition of Poe's *The Raven* by Harper and Brothers the next year [fig. 12]. It was Doré's last major book project, for which he received the considerable sum of 30,000 francs, an indication of the high value his work could demand.¹⁵ As previously noted, the artist was a master of evocative detail. In this drawing for *The Raven* [fig. 10], the narrator, pictured before his fireplace, ponders the death of his beloved mistress, Lenore – to see her, as the Raven repeats, *never more*. The specter of death is his melancholy companion:

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak
December;
And each separate dying ember wrought its
ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; – vainly I sought
to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow – sorrow for
my lost Lenore –
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the
angels name Lenore –
Nameless *here* for evermore.

The Raven was, by far, Poe's most famous poem. It first appeared as the title poem in a book published in November of 1845.¹⁶ It was reprinted and imitated manyfold, making Poe

famous (but not wealthy) and a popular visitor in various city salons in 1845, dressed in raven black and often asked to recite his poem for gathered groups.¹⁷ The incantatory rhythm of the verses, punctuated by "never more," has become ubiquitous to those acquainted with American literature. And its popularity is attested to by Jef Mallott's 2012 comic strip *Frazz*, which strikes a delightfully clever note in its reference to the Raven's cryptic reply [fig. 13].

The Raven was, like most of Poe's poems and a majority of his tales, relatively short, and beginning in the late nineteenth century was selected for limited edition reprints, especially by small presses. Among such was the 1936 Detroit Fine Book Press edition, *The Raven and Other Poems*, illustrated with silver ink block prints on black paper by artist Bruce McPharlin.¹⁸ His flat, minimalist images for "The Raven" [fig. 14] effectively suggest the blurred boundary between reality and the narrator's melancholy imagination as he laments his lost Leonor.

Two more interesting examples of twentieth century small private press productions of Poe's work illustrated by artists less well-known than Doré in the nineteenth century or Irish artist Harry Clarke (discussed below) in the twentieth century, will illustrate this delightful aspect of collectable print media: the thin vertical volume, *The City and the Sea and Other Poems*, published by The Busy Bee during the Second World War, "somewhere in occupied Holland,"¹⁹ and *The Black Cat*, See POE ILLUSTRATORS, page 6

[FIG. 12] Cover for Poe's *The Raven*, Harper and Brothers, 1884, illustrated by Doré.



initially published in 1984 by Alan James Robinson at his Cheloniidae Press.²⁰

Fred Ingram provided the illustrations for the Busy Bee volume, and his monochrome image for “The Haunted Palace” [fig. 15], far different in style than McPharlin’s simple ink block patterns, betrays lingering aspects of a biomorphic Surrealism in the swirling forms rising above the palace ruins:

And travelers, now, within that valley,
Through the red-litened windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghostly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever



[FIG. 14] Paul McPharlin, silver ink block print frontispiece for Poe, *The Raven and Other Poems*, 1936.

And laugh – but smile no more.

In their gruesomely detailed realism, Alan Robinson’s much different illustrations for Poe’s short story *The Black Cat* starkly express the horror that the tale’s protagonist pet, Pluto, has visited upon the story’s ill-fated narrator.²¹ The narrator is awaiting the gallows for the murder and dismemberment of his wife. His sentence of hanging is exactly what, in a fit of rage, he had earlier visited upon his wife’s pet. But a second cat had subsequently joined the household and comes to assume the wretched features of the deceased Pluto [fig. 16]. As he recalls the image of Pluto, he envisions his own future fate:

It was now the representation of an object that I shudder to name – and for this, above all, I loathed, and dreaded, and would have rid myself of the monster had I dared – it was now, I say, the image of a hideous – of a ghastly thing – of the GALLOWS!

Illustrated trade editions of Poe’s collected works, of course, abound by the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, sometimes handsomely enhanced by popular artists, many from the British Isles. I have already noted a few of the important nineteenth-century Frenchmen who illustrated Poe. Noted artist Aubrey Beardsley was the first English illustrator to provide images for Poe’s work: four drawings for a large multivolume limited edition published in 1894. However, his few illustrations lack the enduring thrill of horror found in one of the most popular Poe illustrators of all time, the Irish artist Harry Clarke (1889-1931) [figs. 2, 4 & 17].

Clarke’s work, which critic J. R. Taylor

[FIG. 15] Ingram, “*Haunted Palace*,” from *Poe, City in the Sea and Other Poems*, early 1940s.



[FIG. 13] Jef Mallett, comic strip *Frazz*, October 31, 2012.

called “uniquely nasty,”²² was influenced by Beardsley’s *Art Nouveau* style, but Clarke often utilizes a *horror vacui* approach to detail that, along with a distinctly cryptic facet, has made his illustrations all the more fascinating [fig. 17]. His first major Poe project, a large limited edition folio of the writer’s tales, was completed in 1919, with these same illustrations repeated in numerous reprints of Clarke’s work. Because Clarke’s particular “Poe” style emerged just at the end of the Great War, Burton R. Pollin has suggested that his work, in part, betrays a “post-war disillusionment.”²³

Be that as it may, Clarke’s illustrations often rely for their effect on a distinct feeling of decadence and decay, like his image for Poe’s *Premature Burial* [fig. 2]. Here (in a detail) we see wonderfully rendered the imagined body of a man buried still alive and clutching in terror at the inside of his casket. As Poe explains in his story, first published in July 1844:

...no event is so terribly well adapted to inspire the supremeness of bodily and of mental distress, as is burial before death. The unendurable oppression of the lungs – the stifling fumes from the damp earth – the clinging to the death garments – the rigid embrace of the

[FIG. 16] Alan Robinson, wood engraving, *Poe, The Black Cat*, 1984.



narrow house – the blackness of the absolute Night...the unseen but palpable presence of the Conqueror Worm....

While Clarke worked both in color and in black and white, I prefer the stark, detailed effect of the black-and-white drawings best. His illustration to Poe's story *Morella* [fig. 17], for instance, is one of Clarke's most detailed, with a frenzy of serpentine and floral linear elements covering the picture's entire surface, depicting the story's narrator pondering the mysterious last words of his dead wife Morella.

Morella, first published in 1835, follows a familiar Poe plot: one of "metempsychosis," the passage of the soul from one individual to another – in Poe, usually from one beloved, but now dead, woman to another.²⁴ In this story of distinctly supernatural horror, a man is betrothed to a highly intelligent, well-read woman whom he eventually comes to despise. Like so many of the women in Poe's tales, she mysteriously begins to wane, with death soon an obvious fate. She realizes that her husband does not love her. However, we discover, as death approaches, that Morella is pregnant with their child. In her last moments she utters a mysterious prediction:

I am dying, yet shall I live... The days have never been when thou couldst love me – but

[FIG. 17] Clarke, illustration to Poe's tale *Morella*, 1919 and later.

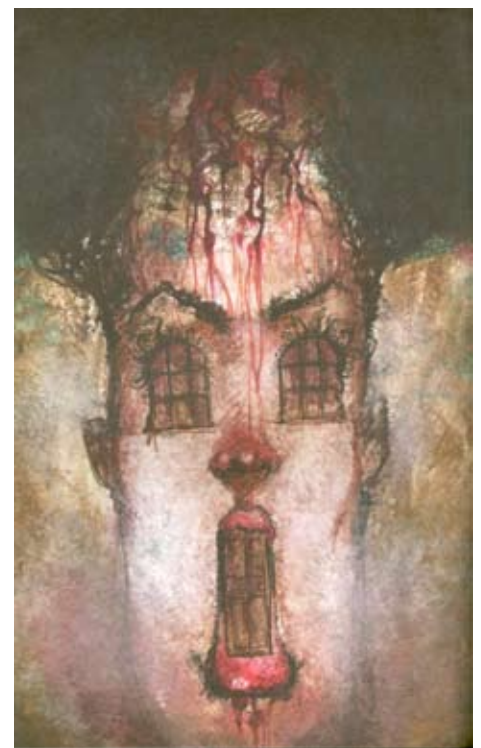


[FIG. 18] Arthur Rackham, illustration to *The Fall of the House of Usher*, 1935.

her in life thou didst abhor in death thou shalt adore.... And when my spirit departs shall the child live – thy child and mine, Morella's. But thy days shall be days of sorrow – that sorrow which is the most lasting of impressions....

A daughter was born at the very moment Morella drew her final breath. As the child grew older, she came to resemble her mother. Nonetheless, her father loved her very much, even though he kept her secluded and unnamed all her growing up years. Additionally, her father had never spoken her mother's name. He finally decided, however, to have her baptized and, thus, to give her a name, that of her dead mother, Morella. But as he finally whispered the name, his daughter fell prostrate on the black slabs of the ancestral vault, speaking the words, "I am here," and died. She was borne to the tomb, but when it was opened, there was no trace of the first Morella.

Clarke's illustrations for *The Fall of the House of Usher* are, like that for *Morella*, wonderfully inventive. Such is Clarke's nightmarish rendition of Lady Madeline, the sister of Roderick Usher, suddenly appearing towards the tale's terrifying conclusion, staggering through the large oak doors of the chamber in which the narrator is reading a story to Roderick [fig. 4]. She had been mistak-



[FIG. 19] Sam Kieth, illustration to *The Fall of the House of Usher*, from Poe, *The Raven and Other Short Stories*, San Diego: Idea and Design Works, 2011.

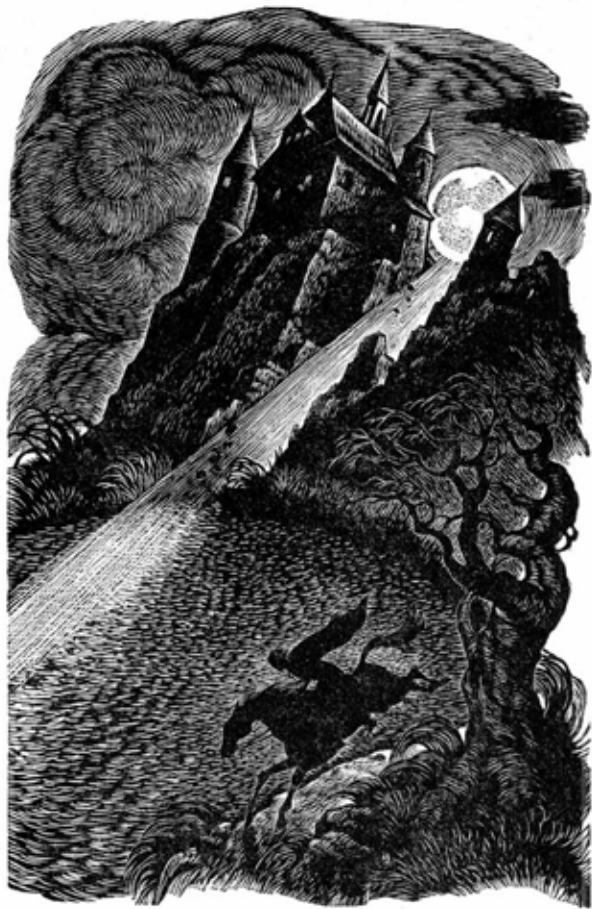
only buried alive but had awakened from her coma-like sleep and, with difficulty, clawed her way out of the family vault:

...there did stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the Lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood on her white robes, and evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame.

Much more recently, collaborating and prolific graphic artists Zdenko Basic and Manuel Sumbrac have, like Clarke, provided an interpretation of the same scene for the 2011 *Steampunk Poe* (Philadelphia: Running Press Teens), complete with clock gears and springs, consistent with this contemporary style of retro-evocation [fig. 5].²⁵ Madeline's white burial gown is covered with blood, her hair alive with energy. The room from which she bursts, with its, dark, stormy atmosphere, suggests the coming climax of this horrific tale.

The Fall of the House of Usher justly remains among Poe's most popular tales, frequently illustrated and often the basis for film and television drama.²⁶ For those who prefer books that terrify, what is there not to like about the presumed dead returning to life and a mysterious ancestral mansion collapsing into a swampy lake? Poe, of course, was deliberately writing a Gothic tale for a mass audience.

See *POE ILLUSTRATORS*, page 8



[FIG. 20] Fig. 20 Fritz Eichenberg, wood engraving for *The Fall of the House of Usher*, from *Poe, Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, New York: Random House, 1944.

POE ILLUSTRATORS, from page 7

But the story's multiple layered construction and the inevitable tendency of the knowledgeable reader to compare the story's iconography to Poe's own despondent life, make for a scholar's paradise of speculation.

There is, of course, a dark hint of incestuous relationship in Poe's story: Roderick and his twin sister, both delicate in health and self-sequestered, are the last remaining representatives of an old ancestral family living in an old ancestral home. Here some see a parallel to Poe and his young but delicate cousin-wife Virginia. Roderick Usher believed that the stones making up the house were sentient, and, indeed, the narrator of the story also perceives that the manor's appearance somehow reflected the decline, even decadence, of Usher's ancestral lineage.²⁷ As Roderick's childhood friend, the narrator, first sees the building, he remarks:

I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity – an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up

from the decayed trees, and the grey wall, and the silent tarn – a pestilent and mysterious vapour, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Poe's atmospheric textual craftsmanship throughout this tale has proved irresistible to illustrators. Arthur Rackham (1867-1939), another highly popular British artist of the early twentieth century, illustrated several of Poe's works, including this one. His evocation of the Usher mansion and skeletal trees [fig. 18] – the approaching narrator visible in the foreground – all convey the sense of gloom and impending doom that will befall the Usher family.

In a very recent graphic novel image, writer and illustrator Sam Kieth (b. 1963), best known by comic book fans as the creator of *The Maxx* and *Zero Girl* series, has given the façade of the Usher house the cartoonish likeness of a face, echoing, perhaps, Rodrick Usher's belief that his ancestral home was sentient. The face façade and

head-like roof are apparently bloodied and broken, forecasting the impending collapse of the Usher dynasty [fig. 19].

Finally, German-American artist Fritz Eichenberg (1901-1990) has rendered the horrific conclusion of Poe's tale in an expressive wood engraving showing the disintegrating mansion with the narrator fleeing in terror [fig. 20]. In the story's dramatic conclusion, both a shocked Roderick and his now cadaverous twin sister collapse together in death in the presence of the narrator, ending the ancient Usher lineage:

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon which now shown vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base.

Trying to discuss all my favorite illustrations for Poe works is not possible in an article of this length. Of course, Poe publications as well as movies, and other mass media of various sorts, continue to be produced. The most recent effort to provide a comprehensive descriptive catalogue of Poe illustrators, researched over nearly two decades, was published by Burton R. Pollin in 1989.²⁸ His book, however, was not really "comprehensive" (although a valiant effort): it was immediately out-of-date as a flood of Poe material continued to be produced. In his book, Pollin indexes over 700 artists, including 1611 publications, arranged by nationality, and more than 200 films based on or inspired by Poe's work and life.²⁹

Since Pollin's publication a number of articles and books have continued to examine Poe's influence on aspects of contemporary "material culture." Scott Peeples' *Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe* (2004), cited earlier, traces changing attitudes towards Poe scholarship over the last 150 years. In Chapter 5, "Lionizing: Poe as Cultural Signifier,"³⁰ Peeples discusses Poe references in mass media, including the animated TV program, "The Simpsons"; various theater productions; modern film including D. W. Griffith, the popular Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi movies of the thirties [fig. 21] and the Vincent Price movies of the sixties. His discussion concludes with a survey of comic books and graphic novels.

Relative to film, Don G. Smith's 1999 book, *The Poe Cinema: A Critical Filmography*, examines 88 movies produced in 14 countries. Christine A. Jackson's study, *The Tell-Tale Art: Poe in Modern Popular Culture* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2012) concentrates on Poe's influence on television programming (including the recent *Monk*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *The Closer*, and *Numb3rs* series) and even mentions cyber-gaming. Finally, among numerous articles that could be noted, Derek P. Royal's essay, "Sequential Poetry: Recent Graphic Narrative Adaptations of Poe," delves into the arena of comic books and graphic novels, including publications such as *Classics Illustrated*, *Mad Comics*, and *Graphic Classics*.³¹

Is it too much of a stretch to predict that our fascination with Poe and his oeuvre will continue relatively unabated? I certainly suspect so – as long as some of us still seek out the thrill of a chilling story and the deliciously rendered image of a body too-soon entombed. Poe's *Raven* provides us with an appropriate conclusion:

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's



[FIG. 21] Universal Pictures movie poster advertising Poe's *The Raven*, starring Karloff and Lugosi, 1935.

that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws
his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies
floating on the floor
Shall be lifted – nevermore!

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NOTES

- ¹ Marie Bonaparte, *The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation*, translated by John Rodker, London: Imago Publishing Co., 1949, p. 45.
- ² Bonaparte, *Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 105.
- ³ Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death*, was first published in *Graham's Magazine*, May 1842. The word "masque" references both the private costume entertainment and the mask worn by the mysterious deathly figure at the tale's climax. See Stephen Peithman, *The Annotated Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, New York: Avenel Books, 1981, p. 113.
- ⁴ First published in 1846.
- ⁵ Quoted in William A. Pannapacker, "A Question of 'Character': Visual Images and the Nineteenth-Century Construction of Edgar Allan Poe," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 3, p. 19.
- ⁶ At the time of the photograph, Poe was engaged to

- of the nineteenth century Griswold's collected works of Poe had gone through 30 reprints.
- ¹⁰ Sandra Tomc, "Poe and His Circle," in Kevin J. Hayes, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 21.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.
 - ¹² Charles Baudelaire, *Baudelaire on Poe*, translated and edited by Lois Hyslop and Francis E. Hyslop, Jr., State College, PA: Bald Eagle, 1952, p. 30.
 - ¹³ The book, in an edition of 240 copies, was not a success and was Manet's last illustrated book. In 1968 a facsimile limited edition was published by Walker and Co. of New York City in association with the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, Harvard College Library.
 - ¹⁴ Quoted in Fred Leeman, "Odilon Redon: The Image and the Text," *Odilon Redon, prince of dreams 1840-1916*, The Art Institute of Chicago; The Van Gogh Museum; and the Royal Academy, London, 1994, p. 177.
 - ¹⁵ Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998, p. 252.
 - ¹⁶ Poe prefaced the book with a tribute to the English poet Elizabeth Barrett (later Browning), whom he admired and whose own poem, "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," evidently inspired the rhythmic cadence of *The Raven*. In a subsequent letter to Poe, she described the commotion that *The Raven* had evoked

poet Sarah Helen Whitman. Much later in an 1874 letter to Poe biographer John Henry Ingram, Whitman referred to the photo image as the "Ultima Thule," referencing Poe's dark poem *Dream-Land*: "I have reached these lands but newly/From an ultimate dim Thule –"; See Pannapacker, "A Question of 'Character,'" p. 9.

⁷ Pannapacker, "A Question of 'Character,'" p. 11.

⁸ *The Fall of the House of Usher* was first published in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1839. Relative to the 19th century "science" of phrenology, Roderick Usher was possessed of great intellectual and artistic sensibilities, and Poe apparently deliberately referenced phrenology in his description. In 1836 he had occasion to review Mrs. L. Miles's *Phrenology, and the Moral Influence of Phrenology*, and this circumstance evidently prompted his interest in the subject. See Peithman, *The Annotated Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 65, note 25.

⁹ See Scott Peebles, *The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2004, pp. 1-5. While Griswold has been severely criticized by posterity for creating such a negative impression of Poe, he was also partially responsible for the popularity of Poe's writings: by the end

- in the British Isles: "Your 'Raven' has produced a sensation, a fit horror, here in England..." See Jeffrey Meyers, *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Legacy*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992, pp. 160-162.
- ¹⁷ Meyers, *Edgar Allan Poe*, pp. 163-164.
- ¹⁸ No. 525 of 950 copies, letterpress printed poems on heavy salmon Ingres laid paper, silver title on black cloth binding (collection of the author). For those who love book-based mysteries, John Dunning's *The Bookman's Wake* (1995), has Cliff Janeway, a former detective, now bookman, pursue an esoteric private press edition of Poe's *The Raven*.
- ¹⁹ No. 329 of 500 copies on Dutch handmade paper (collection of the author).
- ²⁰ The Cheloniidae edition was reprinted in a trade edition by Boston's Northeastern University Press in 1986 (collection of the author). Alan James Robinson founded the Cheloniidae Press with Joel Ginsburg in 1979. Robinson, who has made a national reputation focusing on animals as primary subject matter, produced one additional Poe work at the Cheloniidae Press: *The Raven*, published in 1986.
- ²¹ *The Black Cat* was first published in the August 19, 1843 issue of the *United States Saturday Post*.
- ²² Burton R. Pollin, *Images of Poe's Works: A Comprehensive Descriptive Catalogue*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1989, pp. 9-10.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ²⁴ Similar plots are found in Poe's "Metzengerstein," "Ligeia," and "The Black Cat." See Peithman, *The Annotated Tales of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 39.
- ²⁵ "Steampunk" references a stylistic genre that first originated in the late 1980s and has come to include aspects of fantasy fiction as well as TV programming, fashion, art, and collectables in which there is some retro-reference to the nineteenth century industrial age of steam engines, thus the inclusion of fly wheels, springs, gears and other components of such machines. For a more complete discussion of "Steampunk," see the lengthy online Wikipedia article.
- ²⁶ *The Fall of the House of Usher* was first published in the September 1839 issue of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. American International Pictures made 13 Poe-inspired films between 1960-1971, including one based on this tale. Most were directed by Roger Corman and starred master of horror, Vincent Price; see Peebles, *The Afterlife of Edgar Allan Poe*, p. 136.
- ²⁷ See comments in Scott Peebles article, "Poe's 'Constructiveness' and 'The Fall of the House of Usher,'" in Hayes, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, pp. 178-186; and Bonaparte, *Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, pp. 237-244.
- ²⁸ Burton R. Pollin, *Images of Poe's Works: A Comprehensive Descriptive Catalogue of Illustrations*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1989. Two articles in the *American Book Collector* by Pollin on illustrators of Poe's work preceded his extensive 1989 publication: "Edgar Allan Poe and His Illustrators Part I," Vol. 2, No. 2 New Series (March/April) 1981, pp. 2ff; and "Part II," Vol. 2, No. 3 New Series (May/June) 1981, pp. 33ff.
- ²⁹ In Pollin's extensive catalogue of Poe illustrated publications, countries with the largest numbers include: the United States (482), France (268), Germany (143), and Great Britain (136).
- ³⁰ Pages 126ff.
- ³¹ Derek Parker Royal, "Sequential Poe-try: Recent Graphic Narrative Adaptations of Poe," *Poe Studies/Dark Romanticism*, Vols. 39-40, issues 1-2 (Dec. 2006/January 2007), pp. 55-67.

Where will you be on the night of December 18?

And were you among the lucky ones at the Newberry last December 12?

Dan Crawford

When approaching the Caxton Club Revels each year, the Club Statistician likes to look back and recall how much fun you had last year. Of course, if you were galivanting around doing something else, these figures reflect the fun you MISSED last year.

Number of people at dinner: 107

Number of people who bid: 84

Number of people who won something: 56

Most active bidder: One person bid on 29 items

Winningest bidder: One bidder took home 16 lots

Most items without a loss: One bidder bid on 6 items and won them all

What was at stake: 467 items in 244 lots

Items Left for the Treasure Boxes: Items not bid upon were split between two boxes and sold at the end of the Live Auction; there were 35 lots involved

Culinary Blast from the Past Item: Jane Brody's *Good Food Book: Living the High Carbohydrate Way* (donated by Susan J. Keig)

Oldest Item: A 15th century leaf from a book of prayers to, among other saints, the patron saint of accountants (donated by Junie L. Sinson)

Newest Item: once again, the year's Lake-side Classic (Isabella Bird's *The Englishwoman in America*) arrived just in time for the show (Donated by Susan Levy)

Five other items issued in 2012 were also included.

Heaviest Single Donation: Jerry Meyer's 19 volumes on collecting American Art Pottery were a strain on the arms

Most Numerous Single Donation: Richardson Spofford contributed a collection of 130 back issues of the *Caxtonian*

Donations from Farthest Away: Well, one would probably have to choose the contributions from the estates of Bernie Rost and Evelyn Lampe...unless you feel their presence in spirit makes these the donations from the least distance

Smallest Item: The miniature book *Developing Social Skills*, one of a series of small books derived from the autobiography of Tom Reilly (Donated--and designed, printed, etc.--by

Muriel Underwood)

Items involving a Caxtonian as author, publisher, designer, artist, or some role other than donor: 64

Original Artwork: This year there were prints by William C. Hesterberg (donated by Bill Hesterberg) and Letterio Calapai (from the estate of Bernie Rost), an original editorial cartoon by Barnett (donated by David Meyer), and a caricature of either Fritz Kreisler or Bob Cotner, depending on your point of view



Artistic Blast From the Past: Four rock concert posters from Southern California in the late 1960s (donated by Tony Batko and Alice Schreyer)

Friskiest Book: The Satirical Drawings of Martin von Maele (donated by Bob Karrow, who bought it at a previous Revels auction)

First Book Known to Have Come From a Barn: Botticelli (donated by Frank Schier and the Gesley Estate; the Gesley library occupied most of an old barn)

Book Only Technically From a Barn: Scrapped, published in 1932 by the Pony Barn Press (donated by Steve Tomashefsky)

And Because Some People Have To Be Difficult: *Voices to Share*, published in 2011 by the Haybarn Press (donated by Ed Colker)

More or Less Anonymous Donations: Items were donated by, according to the catalog, "An Anonymous Krochwatcher," "A Dour Donor," "A Laughing Whitefish," "A Random Bibliomaniac," "A Christmas Cinephile," "A Shelf-Cleaner" and "From the Direction of Oak Park"



Best Two-For-One Deal: The four volumes from the Folio Press's deluxe Shakespeare series included the beautifully-printed text of a play by Shakespeare, plus, in the same case, the Oxford Press edition of the same play (donated by Jim Donnelley)

Audiovisual Blast From the Past: Bill Hesterberg's documentary on Thomas Bewick was donated on 16 mm film (from the estate of Bernie Rost)

Another Audiovisual Blast from the Past: the cassette player bought for use by a speaker at a Caxton luncheon was available (batteries not included)

Oldest Book Advertising Piece: Beating out the prospectuses for several Caxton Club books was the 1887 flyer "A La Photo Views," advertising Rand McNally's new indexed world atlas (Donated by Roger S. Baskes)

Objects Shaped Like Books: These included an electric pencil sharpener, a key chain, and a box of Christmas cards (From the estate of Evelyn J. Lampe)

Financial Blast from the Past: A 1947 flyer entitled "Economics Looked In the Eye," announcing that Caxton Club luncheons were being raised from \$1.75 to two bucks

Most Nearly Related Objects: Stefan Zweig's *The Old Book Peddler*, translated by T.W. Koch and published by the Caxton Club in 1937 (donated by John Blew) and the memorial book in honor of T.W. Koch published by the Caxton Club in 1941

Next Most Nearly Related Objects: A vintage Simon Pure Writing Tablet and a Waterman Cartridge Pen (donated by Donna Tuke)

Revels Blast From the Past: A collection of Christmas crackers left over from a Caxton Revels dinner arranged by Karen Skubish

Blast From the Future: Donate Something! (deliver to the Newberry Library or to Tom Joyce). Then show up in December and Buy Something! Quickly, before the Blast is Past.

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CAXTONIAN FOOTNOTES

Wynken de Worde

Persons who happen to find themselves in New York City any time between November 14, 2013 and January 10 of the next year will have an unusual opportunity to delve into one of the collecting interests of our own **Anthony Mourek '99**. An exhibit at the Grolier Club – co-curated by Caxton Club member **Valerie Higgins '12** – explores his love of political cartoons. (If you are unable to visit NYC, the catalog of the exhibit, available from the Grolier Club, would allow you to spend unrestricted time with reproductions of most of the cartoons included and also Mourek's thoughts about all of them. You will miss something, however: his collection is of the original drawings themselves, so this is a rare opportunity to see the originals.)

In that catalog, co-written with Higgins, Mourek tells the story of how he came to collect them:

I grew up in a home fascinated with politics and political cartoons. At that time, Chicago had four major daily newspapers, each with at least one locally based political cartoonist. Every day these newspapers were delivered to our home, and each day we discussed their political cartoons.

Through this process, I grew to appreciate how art could be used as a weapon to attack, to defend and to comment on political figures and issues. I have been interested in this process as an art form since first being introduced to political cartoons published in daily newspapers. But if not for a gift from my father, I may not have become a collector of original drawings.

My father was on the board of a company that decided to create a Civil War collection with the help of book dealer Ralph Newman. When he visited Newman's shop, Ralph took a John T. McCutcheon cartoon from a large stack he had in his office and gave it to my father. My father, in turn, gave it to me, and that became the first item in my political art collection.

From McCutcheon's drawing of a long-forgotten Chicago mayor, my collection has grown into thousands of original drawings of politi-

cal cartoons, 18th- and 19th-century British and Irish prints, posters, books, sculptures, oil paintings, political pottery and even wood block prints of the Sino and Russo-Japanese Wars.

By way of giving you a sample, here is an edited version of Mourek's description of a Thomas Nast cartoon from 1889, first pub-



lished in Chicago's *Illustrated American*:

In this cartoon, Nast criticizes the outcome of the trial of the men accused of murdering Dr. Patrick Henry Cronin of Chicago. Cronin was a member of Clan-na-Gael, a U.S.-based organization headquartered in Chicago that supported Irish independence from Great Britain. The leaders of Clan-na-Gael were known as the "Triangle." Cronin came into conflict with the Triangle when he accused them of misappropriating the organization's funds. Clan-na-Gael supplied funds to groups in Ireland that shared their goals, and some of its less radical members worried that it was giving money to those involved in a bombing campaign waged by Fenians, Irish-Americans who supported the independence of Ireland from Great Britain. It was an early terrorist campaign—the Fenians placed their bombs in highly-trafficked areas and sought to instill

fear in the British people. The campaign deeply divided Irish-Americans who supported Irish independence, since many did not support the tactics of the Fenians. While the Triangle denied that they had supplied any funds for the campaign, members of Clan-na-Gael, including Cronin, demanded accounts of the organization's funds. Between \$100,000 and \$250,000 were unaccounted for, suggesting that the members of the Triangle might have embezzled it. Cronin continued to press the issue. The Triangle ultimately accused Cronin of being a traitor and expelled him from the society, which caused a split in the order when thousands of members resigned in solidarity with Cronin. Realizing that they would make no progress towards Irish independence if they didn't coordinate their efforts, the leaders of the various factions eventually came together to try to reunite the organization. They formed a committee, which included Cronin, in 1888 to investigate the actions of the Triangle. When the committee concluded in its final vote that the charges against the Triangle had not been proven, Cronin threatened to make his notes from the trial public. One member of the Triangle, Alexander Sullivan, reportedly said he wanted Cronin "removed." On May 4, 1889, a man came to Cronin's office and asked that the doctor come with him to assist the man's injured colleague. Cronin and the man left in a carriage together.

Cronin did not return that night, and his body was found in a sewer on May 22. Ultimately, five men were brought to trial for Cronin's murder. The prosecution claimed that they were members of a conspiracy organized by the leadership of Clan-na-Gael to assassinate Cronin. One of them was acquitted, one was found guilty of manslaughter, and three were found guilty of first degree murder. Alexander Sullivan, who probably ordered Cronin's murder, was arrested, but the charges against him were dropped due to lack of evidence. In this cartoon, Nast criticizes the events surrounding the trial. Since the gun with which Justice is held up is labeled "habeas corpus," he is probably commenting on the fact that Sullivan was released due to lack of evidence. Nast clearly thought corruption played a role in the dropping of the charges against Sullivan.

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Caxtonians Read: The Archimedes Codex

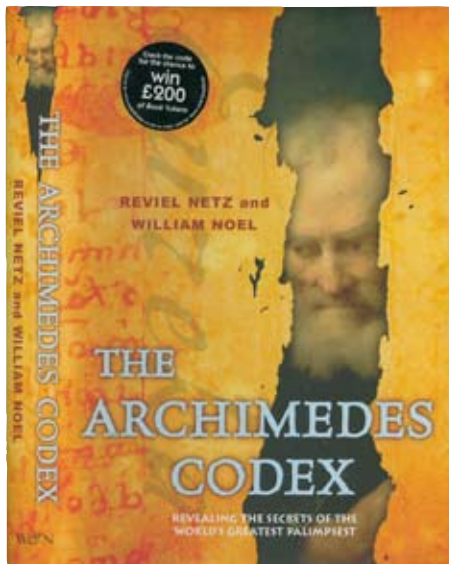
The Archimedes Codex: How a Medieval Prayer Book is Revealing the True Genius of Antiquity's Greatest Scientist, Reviel Netz, William Noel. (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2007). ix, 313 p. ill., 16 color plates. \$27.50.

Reviewed by Robert Karrow

There is a genre of modern non-fiction that combines elements of history, detective story, biography, and scientific investigation – think Dava Sobel's *Longitude* or Steven Johnson's *The Ghost Map*. *The Archimedes Codex* is that kind of book, with the added attraction for Caxtonians that its central subject is itself a book. Actually, "an ugly book.... It was small – about the size of a standard bag of Domino sugar. When I opened it, I saw that the pages were mottled brown in color. Matching tide lines caused by water faced each other across page openings. The pages tended to be brighter in the middle than around the edges where they were more deeply stained. In fact, right on their edges the pages were black, as if they had been in a fire." (They had.)

We come to know this volume, a Greek prayer book finished in 1229, through alternate chapters by the two authors. Will Noel, Curator of Manuscripts at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (quoted above) relates much of the volume's history (with generous asides on book history in general, conservation, and digital imaging) with panache and self-effacing humor. His coauthor, Reviel Netz, Professor of Classics and Philosophy at Stanford, devotes his chapters to what is, quite literally, the *sub*-text, the barely noticeable remnants of treatises by Archimedes that had been quite thoroughly scraped off some 800 years ago so that the vellum could be reused for the prayers. Netz is an expert on Archimedes, the 3rd century BC mathematician, and opens his first chapter with the arresting sentence "Archimedes is the most important scientist who ever lived." Important for many reasons, among them his discoveries in the mathematics of infinity, his application of mathematical models to the physical world, his quite revolutionary use of diagrams (a Netz discovery) and his foreshadowing of the ideas of calculus two millennia before Newton.

Netz walks us through several of Archimedes' astonishing geometrical proofs with liberal use of excellent drawings and explains them so well that for a brief moment, I (who flunked



senior math in high school) almost thought I'd glimpsed the essence of calculus.

The cutting-edge imaging techniques pressed into service to read the obliterated script are well-described and superbly illustrated. In fact the end papers present two extraordinary images: at the front of the book, an opening of a Greek prayer book, with only the faintest hints here and there of another text written crosswise. The back end paper presents this second text, by Archimedes, now fully legible, including two clearly labeled drawings.

Along the way, we get the amazing history of the survival of Archimedes' thought. All of his surviving works (Netz is producing a critical English translation) can be traced to three medieval manuscripts. Two of these have been lost for centuries, the third is the codex of the title. The imaging enabled them to read

for the first time the name of the scribe who produced the prayer book, whom Noel and Netz first curse for his near destruction of the ancient texts. In time though, they learn to respect his work, for he, though unwittingly, provided the time capsule that would save Archimedes for his twenty-first century readers. The book is dedicated to the authors' loved ones, and to Ioannes Myronas, the 13th century priest-scribe.

And Myronas was catholic in his choices of manuscripts to palimpsest. Not only did he inadvertently preserve the unique Greek texts of Archimedes' treatises on *Method*, *Stomachion*, and *On Floating Bodies*, but he also managed to save lost speeches of the Greek orator Hyperides and part of a second- or third-century AD commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*.

Work continues on the codex, which also continues to live at the Walters, on a kind of long-term loan. Noel gratefully acknowledges that the entire project was made possible by "Mr. B," who not only bought the manuscript at a Christie's auction in 1988, but paid for the elaborate (and very expensive) study and imaging that underlies the research and that continues to this day. Noel, Netz, and two other scholars have since produced a two-volume work on the palimpsest, published by the Cambridge University Press, and all the raw imaging data, as well as transcriptions of the texts have been published on the web (at www.archimedespalimpsest.org).

The "Archimedes palimpsest" may well be the most thoroughly studied book in the world, and *The Archimedes Codex* is a most readable and enjoyable introduction to it.

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Caxton Club Grant Recipients Announced

This year, from 12 applicants (seven from University of Iowa, three from Columbia College, and one each from Dominican and University of Miami, Ohio) the committee selected five recipients. They have been invited to attend our November dinner meeting to receive their grants. The winners are:

Pamela Olson, \$1700. She is an MFA candidate in Book Arts at the University of Iowa Center for the Book. **Greta Smith, \$1700.** She is a PhD candidate in English at Miami University, Ohio. **Anne Covell,**

\$1500. She is an MFA candidate in Book Arts at the University of Iowa Center for the Book. **Heather Buechler, \$1000.** She is an MFA candidate at Columbia College Chicago Center for Book & Paper Arts. **Clare Jones, \$1000.** She is both a candidate for an MFA in poetry at the Iowa Writers' Workshop and a candidate for graduate certificate in book arts at the University of Iowa.

Additional information about their applications will appear in a future issue.

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Caxton Club on the Move: Columbia College

Monday evening, November 11, 2013

Columbia College Center for Book and Paper Arts, 1104 South Wabash,
Second Floor, Chicago, Illinois.

The Center for Book and Paper Arts will have several outstanding exhibits, including: ♦ works of Thomas Ingmire, a leading American calligrapher, ♦ Soviet posters from the collection of Caxtonian Bill Cellini, Jr., and ♦ DIY: a juried show of print-on-demand photo books. Our host will be Steve Woodall, Caxtonian and director of the center.

5-5:30. Welcoming remarks from Steve Woodall. Light refreshments.

5:30-6:50. Concurrent 20-minute presentations and tours.

Exhibition Overview:

Form and Expression: The Written Word - the works of calligraphic artist Thomas Ingmire;

DIY: Photographers and Books, an exploration of print-on-demand photo books; Soviet Posters from the Collection of Bill Cellini, Jr. on reading and literacy awareness.

Remarks by Bill Cellini Jr. and Jessica Cochran, Curator of Exhibitions and Programs, Center for Book and Paper Arts.

Print Studio Tour and Demo. View the print studio, featuring letterpress and offset presses.

Paper Studio and Demo. View papermaking.

Artist Book Showcase. Visitors will have a hands-on opportunity to inspect the works of the Center's students and items from the Center's collection.

7:00 Three-course dinner including wine and beverages with our hosts at Brasserie LM, 800 South Michigan

Space is limited. Reservations are essential.

The program at Columbia is free to members.

Dinner at LM with fellow Caxtonians and our hosts is \$45.

Contact Jackie Vossler at 312-266-8825 or jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com; or Dan Crawford 312-255-3730 or caxtonclub@newberry.org



CAXTONIANS COLLECT, from page 15

and there was an open bar before dinner. The main course always included a large piece of beef. There were no vegetarian options. And book collecting has changed too. Now there are more women collectors, and many people have found rewarding things to collect besides 'high spots.' I learned a lot from my fellow

Caxtonians, as well as from my colleagues at the Newberry. When I left the library to pursue further graduate studies, President Bill Towner presented me with a gift: a copy of John Carter's *Taste and Technique in Book Collecting.*"

She still has that volume, along with thousands of others, including the works of several

Following Up On Prior Grant Recipients...



Club president Susan Hanes, right, and Secretary Jackie Vossler, left, attended the dedication. MFA candidate Alex Borgen, is in the center.

Jackie Vossler

Dodging the pouring rain and watching the clock, Susan Hanes used the cocktail hour of her first meeting as president to attend the dedication for the expansion of the Papermaker's Garden. In 2012 Columbia College's Center for Book and Paper Arts responded positively to Alex Borgen's proposal to use some outdoor space for growing native plant fibers for hand-papermaking. The Caxton Club, too, saw the vision in this project and in 2012 awarded a grant to Alex to document her work in the Papermaker's Garden.

The Garden started as just five raised beds. However, as of September 18, the new and improved Papermaker's Garden featured an expanded growing space, a rainwater collection system, a performance stage, and recognition from the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs.

In the Spring of 2014 the Center's Papermaker's Garden will be the hub for papermaking activities and student programs with a performance space to enjoy some sweet tunes. The Papermaker's Garden is located at South Wabash and 8th Street.

§§

important fine press printers, like Robin Price, Claire van Vliet, Michael Kuch, and Carolee Campbell. Her life with fine books and decorated papers plants her firmly in the Caxton Club world.

§§

Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "Play, Pretend, and Dream: Caldecott Medal and Honor Books, 2010-2013" (16 Caldecott Medal and Honor award winners from the last four years), Picture Book Gallery, Ryan Education Center, through December 1. "Mark Kozloff: Critic and Photographer" (exhibition surveys Kozloff's ongoing engagement with words and images), Galleries 1-4, through January 5, 2014. "Dreams and Echoes: Drawings and Sculpture in the David and Celia Hilliard Collection" (115 works on paper from the couple's collection), Galleries 124-127, through February 16, 2014. "Devouring Books" (books, prints, and drawings from Europe and America examining food culture), November 19 to January 27, 2014.

Chicago Architecture Foundation, 224 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-922-3432: "Take Me to the River: Building Chicago's New Waterfront," Lecture Hall Gallery, through December.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: "The Feminine Perspective: Women Artists and Illustrators," through November 10. "Healing Plants" (illustrated herbals), opens November 15.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: "Vivian Maier's Chicago" (Maier spent her adult life as a nanny but devoted her free time and money to photography), through January 2014.

Columbia College Center for Book and Paper Arts, 1104 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, 312-269-6630: "DIY (Visits Chicago): Photographers and Books" (juried exhibit exploring print-on-demand photo books), through December 7. "Form and Expression: The Written Word" (a selection of books, works on paper, and collaborations by American calligrapher Thomas Ingmire), through December 7.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Official and Unofficial:



Newberry Library: *Civil War North*
JANE CURRIE BLAIR, *THE BOYS IN BLUE*. 1867



U of Chicago Library: *Race and Design*
ROGER LEWIS AND HARRY OLSEN. *JAZZIN' THE COTTON TOWN BLUES*.
NEW YORK: M. WITMARK & SONS, 1917



MCA: *Chicago Plaza Project: Amanda Ross-Ho*
CHARACTER AND SHAPE OF ILLUMINATED THINGS, 2013; PHOTO: NATHAN KEAY, © MCA

Photographs from the World's Columbian Exposition and Century of Progress" (photographs depicting corporate visions for the fairs and visitors' individual experiences), through March 2, 2014. "Illustrated Press: Chicago Home in One Place: A South Side Story and Kathy Has a Question" (founded by Chicago journalist Darryl Holliday and graphic artist Erik Nelson Rodriguez, The Illustrated Press produces journalism as comics), Congress Corridor, ground floor, ongoing.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660: "Chicago Plaza Project: Amanda Ross-Ho" (how different lighting drastically affects how details appear in an image), through December 2.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North" (major exhibition of more than 100 items that focuses on the enormous, and costly, effect the war had on civilians), through March 14, 2014

Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive Evanston, 847-491-7658: "Homage to Khidekel by Mikhail Karasik" (one of 12 copies of an artists book that attempts to interpret the architecture and drawings of Soviet artist and architect Lazar Khidekel, 1904-1986), ongoing.

University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: "Race and the Design of American Life" (exhibit traces the vexed history of racial design, from stark racist caricature to the productions of black-owned advertising firms), through January 4, 2014.

Woodson Regional Library, 9525 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, 312-747-6900: "Faith in the Struggle: Rev. Addie L. Wyatt's Fight for Labor, Civil Rights and Women's Rights" (exhibit tracing life of the late Rev. Wyatt, co-pastor of Chicago's Vernon Park Church of God and one of the leading human rights activists in 20th century America), through March 15, 2014.

Send your listings to lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net

Caxtonians Collect: Michèle V. Cloonan

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

In doing my pre-interview research about Michèle Cloonan, I first looked into the line on her email contact information that reads “Editor-in-Chief, *PDT&C*.” *PDT&C* turns out to be an academic journal, published by the German company De Gruyter; it stands for *Preservation, Digital Technology & Culture*. It’s the new title for what used to be called *Microform Review*. It’s all about the problems of preserving digital heritage. “Archiving Aggregates of Individually Created Digital Content: Lessons from Archiving the Occupy Movement” is today its most-downloaded article title. For a person who cut her bookish teeth as a conservator at the Newberry, Cloonan has come a long way.

She grew up in Chicago, then went to Bennington College in Vermont. There she tried her hand at bookbinding, working with the bookbinder Kathryn Gerlach, who bound books for Claude Frederick’s Banyan Press. After graduation, she returned to Chicago where she enrolled in school at the University of Chicago. She wanted to study conservation, and through the good offices of Sidney Huttner, who at that time worked in the Special Collections Department at Chicago, went to Trinity College, Dublin, to work under the book conservator Tony Cains.

The love of book collecting became serious while she was in Dublin. Cains suggested that Cloonan visit Maggs Bros. in London on a vacation. “I grew up in [Chicago’s] Hyde Park, and we must have had 20 used bookstores there when I was a child,” she says. “But Maggs Bros. was a completely different experience. My grandmother had lived across the street from the Morgan Library in New York, so I had seen lots of fine books behind glass. But at Maggs, they were there to be held and purchased!”

When she came back to Chicago, she worked for Paul Banks in the conservation lab

at the Newberry library for two years before he moved on to Columbia University, to start the first academic book conservation program in the United States, modeled partially on art conservation programs. Cloonan concluded her studies at the University of Chicago with a Masters in General Studies in the Humanities, focused on art history. It was during this period – under the thrall of the Newberry Library and the University of Chicago – that she joined the Caxton Club in 1980.



However, the pull of librarianship reasserted itself, and she enrolled at the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana. While there, she managed a masters and a PhD in library science, and also made the acquaintance of the man who was to become her husband, Sid Berger. “Both of us had collected books as long as we could read,” she explained. “We each had favorite private presses, but looking at each other’s books expanded our tastes and interests. We both loved paper – I had gotten excited about paste papers as a bookbinder – but after coming together we suddenly got serious collecting paper.” So serious, in fact, that they started collecting papers extensively and have hosted *Hand Papermaking’s* field tours.

Cloonan and Berger have been peripatetic in their careers, but have always managed to work in the same general region. For Cloonan, that was first Brown University (Providence), then UCLA (Los Angeles), then Smith College (Northampton), and since 2002, Simmons College (Boston). Her current role at Simmons College is as a professor in the Graduate School of Library and Information

Science where she was dean for over ten years. “Fortunately, I have more time to focus on collecting now that I am no longer dean,” she says. “The demands on your time when you are an academic administrator never seem to stop. For example, sometimes I’ve thought it would be interesting to attend a Caxton symposium, but when I was dean it was always impossible to travel in April.” (Berger’s job is not all that far away: he’s the Library Director of the Phillips Library at the Peabody Essex Museum

in Salem. Simmons College is on the Fenway in Boston, and they live in Waban [a village of Newton], Massachusetts. The three locations form a lopsided triangle.)

She admits that they may not “be able” to move

again. The collecting – especially of the paper – has gotten out of hand. Their entire climate-controlled basement is filled with books and papers – perhaps 20,000 of the latter. “It’s not all that hard to move books,” she admits, “but paper is more difficult to pack and transport. If we had to move, I don’t know how we’d do it.”

Despite being firmly planted in the past through her collections, Cloonan manages to look resolutely forward to the issues that confront librarians and archivists in the future. “First of all, we have to distinguish what is important about a particular book or item of ephemera,” she says. “Sometimes it is imperative to preserve original copies. If it is a handmade item, or a manuscript, then it must be preserved as is.” What of archival items which were ‘born digital’? “Digital media is constantly changing. You have to preserve the ability to preserve. There are a number of strategies that can be used to preserve digital content.” That’s the sort of issue that *PDT&C* confronts.

Cloonan remembers the ambience of the Caxton Club when she joined in 1980. “In those days, most of the members were men See *CAXTONIANS COLLECT*, page 13

Photograph by Jeannette L. Austin



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Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Friday Nov. 8, 2013, Union League Club
Alex Rivlin on "Collecting and Bookbinding
Adventures in the Evil Empire"

Alexander Abraham Rivlin was born in 1946 in Kharkov (Ukraine), into the family of a prominent attorney. He grew up to be a senior scientist in experimental physics at scientific institutions, all the while pursuing his passion: book collecting. He was often stymied – but never stopped – by an atmosphere thick with suppression and fear: banned books, intrigues, assassinations, censorship, smuggling, and the KGB. Alex nevertheless amassed an extensive library including Russian literature and history and early printed books with woodcut or engraved illustrations. To maintain his collection, he studied bookbinding. In 1996 Alex and his wife seized the opportunity to follow their son (a graduate student at the U of Chicago), and they emigrated to the US (via Israel and Italy). The destiny of his collection will be explained. For the past 15 years, Alex has been IT Consultant for Allstate, all the while carefully building a second library. Recently retired, Alex tends to the needs of his books and those of his book repair customers.

*November luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$30. **Please reserve by noon Wednesday for Friday lunch.** November dinner:*

Beyond November...

DECEMBER LUNCHEON

On Dec 13, Caxtonian Peggy Sullivan will interview Brian Bannon, newer (2012) commissioner of the Chicago Public Library. Among her many positions, Peggy was an assistant commissioner of the Chicago Public Library (1977-1981).

DECEMBER DINNER

Our annual Revels, including fundraising auction, will take place at the Newberry Library on Wednesday, December 18. Get your auction items to Dan Crawford at the Newberry!

Dinner: Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2013, Union League Club
Nicholas Basbanes on "Cultural History
of Paper and Paper Making"

Paper. From its invention in China two millennia ago to record the thoughts of scholars, to the recycled papers that have become our napkins and pizza boxes, paper continues to transform itself. The "paperless society" remains an elusive dream. It is hard to imagine hygiene without paper or skyscrapers without blueprints. Paper has an impact on all aspects of our lives. Basbanes will talk of his travels following the history of paper from its beginning in China; along the Burma Road; to Landover, Maryland and the National Security Agency where cryptologists pulp secret documents for recycling into pizza boxes; to Dalton, Massachusetts and the Crane Company Paper Mill, the exclusive supplier of paper for our "greenbacks" since 1879. Nicholas Basbanes is the author of the bestseller *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*. David McCullough calls him "the leading authority of books about books." His new book *On Paper* has already been described as the definitive book on the history of paper. Copies will be available for signing.

*Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Timing: spirits at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. Dinner is \$48, drinks are \$5 to \$9. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org. **Please reserve by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

JANUARY LUNCHEON

Mark Twain, Margaret Atwood, Hamlin Garland, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, and other literati spent time on or near the Rock River. Caxtonian Frank Schier, owner, editor, and publisher of the thriving *Rock River Times*, tells the story Jan. 10, at the Union League.

JANUARY DINNER

On Wednesday Jan. 22, 2014, Amed Sadri, Gorter Professor of Islamic World Studies and Professor of Sociology at Lake Forest College, will talk on his recent edition of "The Epic of the Persian Kings." **Please note this is the fourth Wednesday of the month.**

See page 13 for news of the Club's field trip to Columbia College on November 11.