

## Typographic Books from Intaglio Printing Plates

The methods of descriptive bibliography apply

Ronald K. Smeltzer

My purpose here is to show that the characteristics of many books produced from intaglio printing plates (whether etched or hand engraved) can be described with the standard methods of descriptive bibliography presently used for letterpress-printed books. That is, gathering formulas and other symbolic notations can be used to provide a complete statement about the printing. One example of such a book from this author's collection will be illustrated and described. In this example, a few leaves of letterpress-printed text are included as text added to an earlier all-intaglio edition, and a very simple modification to the format of the gathering statement permits the letterpress and intaglio leaves to be distinguished in the gathering formula.

Intaglio-printed books appear to fall into two fundamental categories. What are referred to here as "typographic" ones have gatherings created from folded printed sheets just as in a letterpress-printed book. "Non-typographic" ones are assembled from nonconjugate printed leaves, which are bound by such means as oversewing, side sewing, sewing onto stubs, or a spine adhesive process. To the author's knowledge, no prior notice has been taken that some intaglio-printed books can be fully described using the standard methods of Bowers.<sup>1</sup> The extensive article by Tanselle about the description of nonletterpress material in books does not address the case considered here.<sup>2</sup>

Because of its attractiveness, the most famous and recognized intaglio-printed book is John Pine's edition of Horace.<sup>3</sup> However Pine's Horace is not a typical representative of the genre and is perhaps unique, as it seems to have been created specifically to imitate letterpress printing. More generally, books printed from intaglio plates were noticed at least as early as 1810 in a book by France's famous bibliographer Gabriel Peignot, who listed 60

titles along with a six-page essay under the title "Notice Bibliographique de Livres dont le texte est gravé" in his bibliography of curious and unusual books.<sup>4</sup> Many of the works listed have indications such as "in-4°," "-8°," etc, but there is no evidence to indicate if these are signed gatherings or simply folded sheets. There seems to be no modern bibliography for this type of book.

In his essay, Peignot proposes three reasons to produce books from intaglio printing plates. One obvious case is that if intaglio-created illustrations dominate over text and are to be integrated within the text, both intaglio and letterpress printing of the sheets will be required. A second case arises if letterpress is unable to easily create the features to be printed, the most common example being music. A third case involves providing a chance to show off aspects of artistic merit associated with etching and engraving and with the integration of text and illustrations. Peignot's third category would include attempting to imitate a conventional book, as with Pine's Horace, and to show skills in cal-

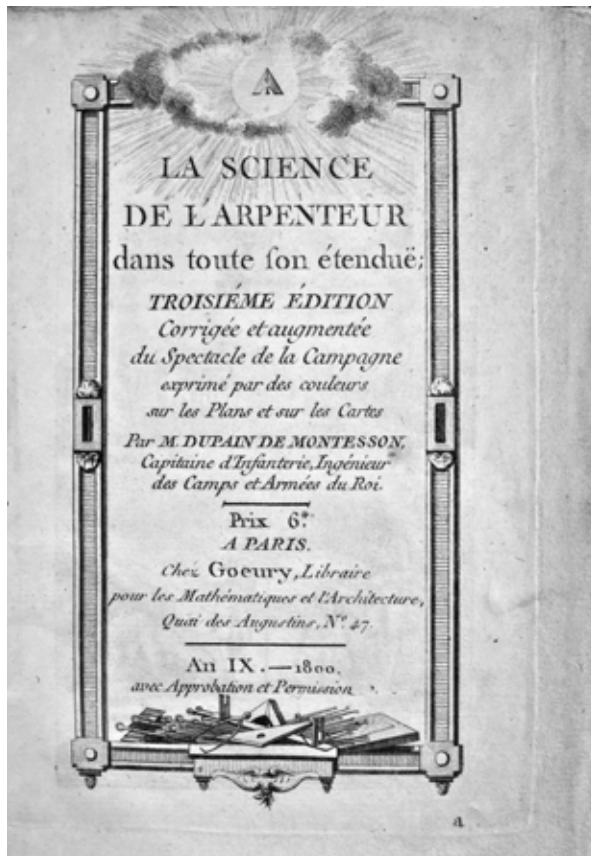
ligraphy, as discussed elsewhere.<sup>5</sup>

One might add to Peignot's suggested reasons to print books by intaglio the idea that intaglio plates would enable printing on demand without the need to keep standing type. In addition, minor revisions could be made using standard methods of altering copper plates. Another possible reason in 18th-century France for the appeal of intaglio-printed books may have been to minimize

problems associated with the regulations of the book trade. For the production and distribution of intaglio-printed material – at least in the form of single sheets – in 18th-century France, there was no regulation that engravers obtain a government censor's approval with an approbation statement, as was required to sell printed books legally.<sup>6</sup> Whether or not this

exception applied to intaglio-printed books is doubtful, but it could be argued that the printed sheets were broadsides at the beginning of the book-making process. It may not

Fig. 1. Title page from the author's copy of Dupain's book described in this article.





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DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY, from page 1

be just a coincidence that most of the notes in my file about intaglio-printed books are for French publications.

In his 2015 Lyell Lecture, Michael J. Suarez suggested that intaglio-printed books generally are known in four categories: topography, religion and philosophy, architecture, and illustrated catalogs of collections.<sup>7</sup> He also suggested that this type of book was produced for the marketplace of the more elite members of society. In this paper another type of intaglio-printed text is described: a technical book, in this case one written to provide the fundamental principles and methods of land surveying for engineers.

*La Science de l'Arpenteur* by Dupain de Montesson (1713-after 1790) is seldom noticed, in part because it is an uncommon book in libraries and in the marketplace. The author was a French military engineer about whom little is known, although he was the author of eight books on military engineering subjects. The only notice of his birthdate appears in a 19th-century publication, which also mentions his given names Louis-Charles.<sup>8</sup> A standard French biographical encyclopedia states that Dupain was still alive in 1790 and speculates that he probably died during the early years of the French Revolution.<sup>9</sup> Having been an officer in the royal army, he could have been a person of interest to the revolutionaries, but probably not at almost 80 years of age; his name does not appear in records of victims of the guillotine.<sup>10</sup> No evidence was found to indicate that Louis-Charles Dupain de Montesson was a member of the prominent de Montesson family, many of whom were military officers.<sup>11, 12</sup> Just why Dupain's book, about 90 pages of almost all text with technical illustrations on separate plates, was conceived to be printed intaglio remains a mystery.

Excepting the first edition, in 1766, of Dupain's text on surveying, a second work *Le Spectacle de la Campagne*, also printed from intaglio plates, follows the text and plates of *La Science de l'Arpenteur*. The title page of the second text includes "Pour servir de Suite à la Science de l'Arpenteur" and has no imprint information, so it is a proper part of *La Science de l'Arpenteur*, not a separate work. Dupain's book discussed here is the only science and engineering text printed intaglio in typographic form known to this author. The rarity of Dupain's book is very possibly due to the small number of copies printed for a limited market with many copies being discarded when the technical matter became outdated.

When reference is made to other examples of Dupain's text, they are usually called "issues" rather than editions because a number of differently dated examples all say "Troisième Édition" on the title

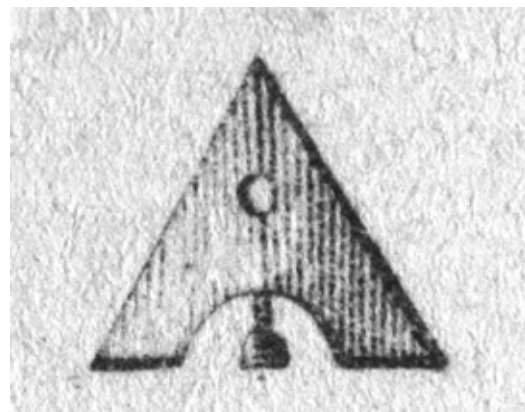


Fig. 2. Symbols of the royal and the revolutionary regimes as depicted on title pages of pre- and post-French Revolution issues of *La Science de l'Arpenteur*.



page. For different issues, the date and sometimes the imprint information were burnished off the copper plate and new information engraved, but the edition statement was not altered after 1777, which was the first labeled "Troisième Édition." For the purposes of this article, the issue of Dupain's book with the imprint "Paris, An IX – 1800, Chez Goeury" was selected, in large part because it has a more complex and interesting gathering structure than earlier issues: it contains three inserted letterpress-printed leaves. The An IX – 1800 issue, whose title page is shown in Fig. 1, has these leaves and other interesting features because of changes made to the book as a result of the French Revolution. For example, near the top of the title page the triangular level with a plumb bob replaced three *fleurs-de-lis* in the same place in issues published before the French Revolution, as illustrated in Fig. 2. Being in a contemporary wrapper and never bound, the author's copy of this issue of Dupain's book is easy to examine to understand the gathering structure.

Upon opening, one immediately realizes that *La Science de l'Arpenteur* is composed of signed gatherings printed intaglio. The gatherings are octavos with the first four leaves signed. All the leaves have plate marks from the intaglio printing. The first four leaves of each gathering have plate marks in the lower and outer margins and the second four leaves have a plate mark in the lower margin. The



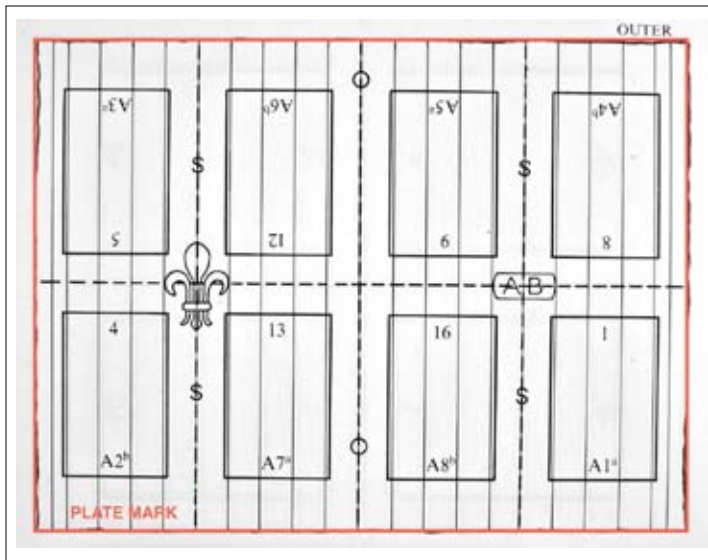


Fig. 3. Layout of octavo showing plate lines (red) from an intaglio printing plate. (Modified from Fig. 50 in Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1974).

origin of the plate marks on the leaves can be understood from an octavo layout with the outline of an intaglio printing plate added to the diagram, as shown in Fig. 3. Based upon the plate marks, the size of the intaglio printing plates for Dupain's book was about 34 by 43 centimeters.

Dupain's text in *La Science de l'Arpenteur* including *Le Spectacle de la Campagne* can be described with this straightforward statement:

8°: a<sup>4</sup> (-a<sub>4</sub>) **π1** A–E<sup>8</sup> F<sup>4</sup>(F<sub>3</sub> + 'Fiiij') **χ1,2** <sup>2</sup>a–c<sup>8</sup> d<sup>4</sup>; intaglio printed excepting three letterpress leaves identified in bold.

The formula differs from the usual format only by invoking the use of both regular weight and bold characters to distinguish the intaglio-printed and letterpress-printed leaves. More detail based upon the gathering statement is as follows: The first gathering lacks leaf a<sub>4</sub>, which after the French Revolution is not surprising, because this leaf in earlier issues consists of documentation – the approbation statement of the government's censor and the permission to publish statement – associated with government regulation of the book trade. The inserted letterpress-printed leaf, with vertical chain lines, after a<sub>3</sub> is assigned π1, following Bowers (pp. 215-216) allowing pi to be used for any uninferred or unsigned leaf in advance of the first letter of the main alphabetical series in a formula. Leaf π1 is tipped onto a stub of the title page left from the removal of a<sub>4</sub>, as shown in Fig. 4. The stub over the inside margin of leaf A1 in Fig. 4 is from the paste-down sheet of the front wrapper.

Following π1, are five regular octavo gatherings, after which is a four-leaf gathering F with an extra leaf signed 'Fiiij' inserted after F<sub>3</sub>. The

real F<sub>4</sub>, unsigned, is present after the inserted leaf. The single leaf 'Fiiij' was printed from its own copper plate: the leaf has plate marks in all four margins around the text. Three of the plate marks are visible in Fig. 5, and the fourth plate mark is just visible by close examination inside the fold on the turn-over stub, Fig. 6,

between F<sub>1</sub> and F<sub>2</sub>. *La Science de l'Arpenteur* ends with two disjunct, letterpress-printed leaves, with vertical chain lines, assigned χ1,2, with the comma separating the two numbers

indicating two nonconjugate single leaves, as per Bowers (p. 228). Following the two disjunct leaves is the gathering statement of *Le Spectacle de la Campagne*, which begins the second use of a lowercase alphabet.

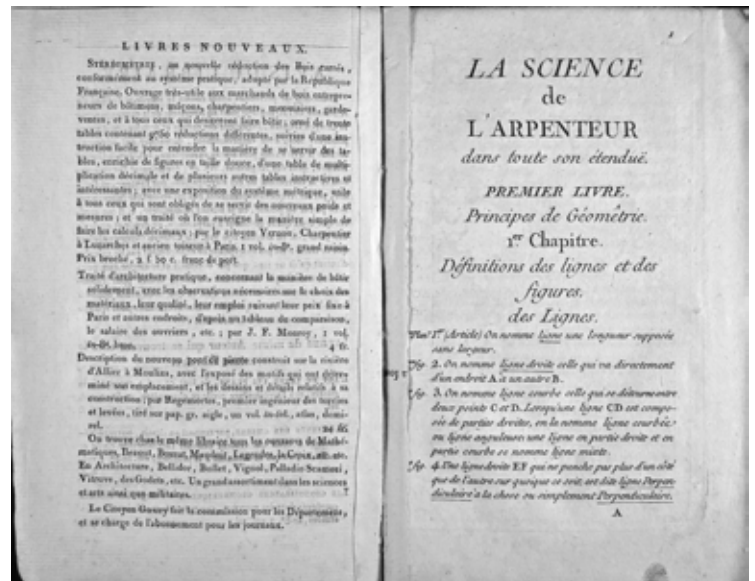
The three inserted letterpress leaves in the A IX – 1800 issue are associated with the

book's being the first reissue since well before the French Revolution. The first inserted leaf π1 is a statement by the new publisher, Goeruy – or as he identifies himself "Citoyen Goeruy" – to say that he is republishing the important book by "Citoyen Dupain." Goeruy also lists other books by Dupain and by other authors that can be purchased at his place of business. Much more interesting are the two letterpress leaves χ1,2 titled "Instruction sur les Nouvelle Mesures" inserted at the end of *La Science de l'Arpenteur*. These two leaves introduce the new system of weights and measures – the metric system – initiated by the revolutionary government. Leaf χ1 was printed with a typeface that imitates handwritten text perhaps slightly similar to the engraved text throughout the book; Fig. 7 shows the recto of χ1 and the wide stub to which it and the preceding folding plate 8 are attached. The second leaf χ2 contains tables of conversions among different systems of measures, and Fig. 8 shows the verso of χ2 and the title page of the second text in the book.

Dupain's book contains two types of intaglio-printed illustrations. *La Science de l'Arpenteur* has eight precisely engraved folding plates between F<sub>4</sub> and χ1,2 illustrating the basics of geometry and the application of geometry to land surveying and five curious decorative illustrations, three in the text and two full-page engravings on leaf F<sub>4</sub>. Fig. 9 shows one of the smaller ones; depicted is a tax office with a chart referring to the small commune of St. Firmin, which can be read with a magnifying lens. Coincidentally or not, the paste-down paper, presumably waste-paper on the inside of the wrapper in the

See *DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY*, page 4

Fig. 4. Opening between leaves π1 and A1 showing the title-page stub, left from removing leaf a<sub>4</sub>, onto which the letterpress-printed leaf π1 is tipped. The stub over the inner margin of A1 is the end of the front paste down.



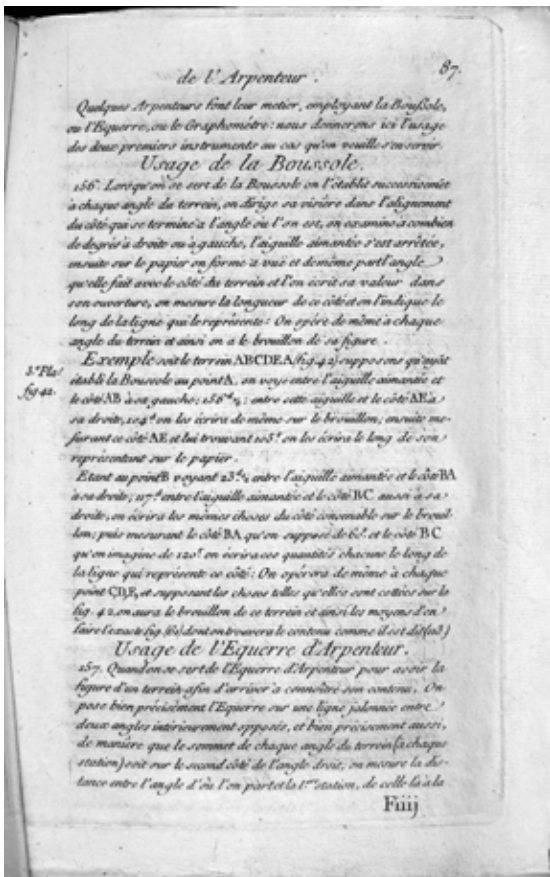
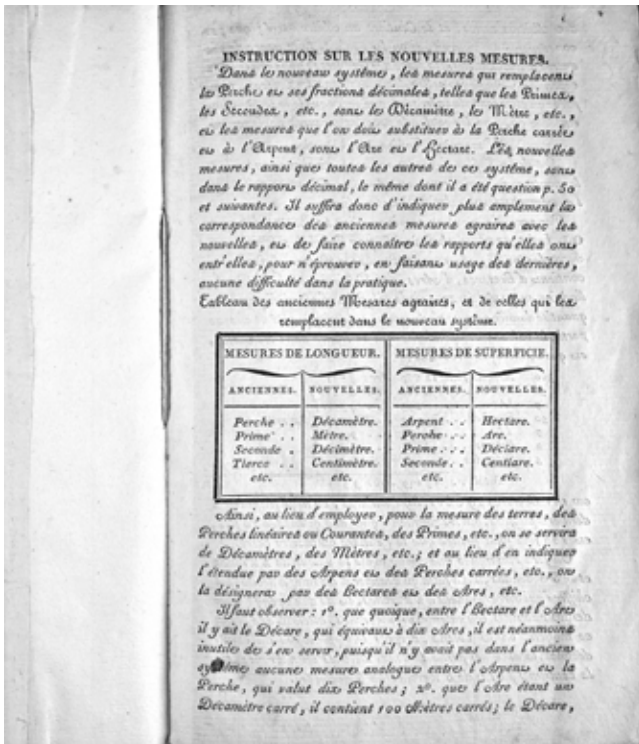


Fig. 5. Inserted engraved leaf 'Fiiiij' between leaves F3 and F4 showing a plate mark bounding the text on three sides.

DESCRIPTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY, from page 3 author's copy of the book displays a printed chart headed "Contribution Foncière," that

Fig. 7. The recto of letterpress-printed leaf x1 showing the long stub to which it and the preceding folding Plate 8 are attached.



is, Land Tax. Le Spectacle de la Campagne contains one folding engraved plate and the title page vignette in Fig. 8 as the only illustrations.

In this article the detailed description of an unusual book produced from intaglio printing plates presented the opportunity to introduce the idea that the formal methods of

descriptive bibliography after Bowers are not limited to books produced by letterpress printing. It was noted that although many intaglio-printed books are composed of assembled single sheets, some, referred to here as typographic, were produced from large printed sheets folded into signed gatherings. A particularly interesting edition of an intaglio-printed book that contains a few inserted letterpress-printed leaves has been used here to demonstrate that a complete and proper gathering formula can be written that will distinguish letterpress leaves and gatherings from intaglio-printed leaves and gatherings. The usual formalism for gathering statements has been modified simply to allow the use of regular- and bold-weight symbols.

Fig. 8. The verso of letterpress-printed leaf x2 and the title page of the second text. The stub, just visible, to which x2 is attached also attaches the folding Plate 7 to the spine sewing.

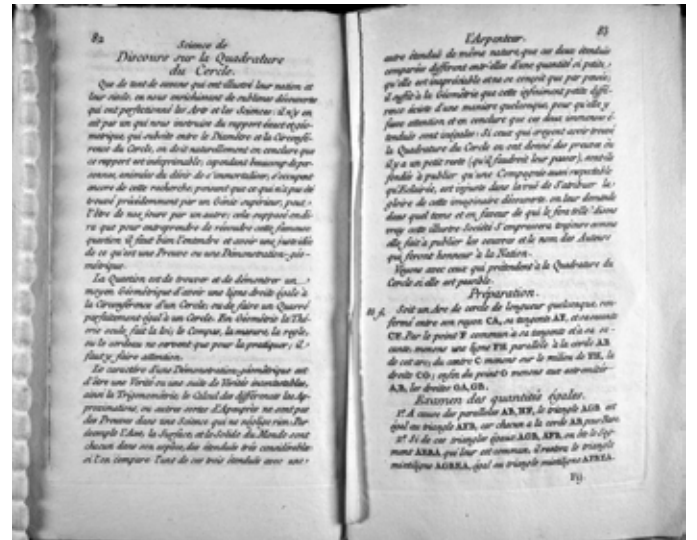
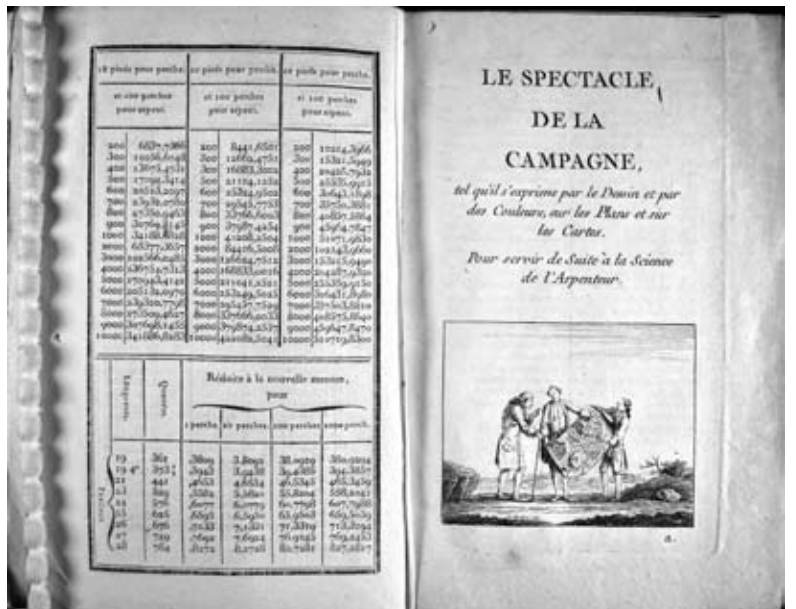


Fig. 6. Opening between leaves F1 and F2 showing plate marks and the stub of inserted leaf 'Fiiiij'. There is a plate mark, not visible in the figure, in the fold of the stub.



concept of intaglio printing arose from the need for short runs of printing over a long time period. Nine years passed between the first and second editions of Dupain's text. One is reminded of the military manuals printed lithographically from handwriting at Metz in France and at Chatham in England in the 19th century. Twyman suggests that this method was inexpensive and convenient for short-run work.<sup>13</sup> But the use of engraved copper plates hardly fits this scheme other than perhaps for the idea, in the earlier century, of print on demand without the need to keep type standing.

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<sup>1</sup> Fredson Bowers, *Principles of Bibliographical Description* (Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> G. Thomas Tanselle, "The Description of Non-Letterpress Material in Books." *Studies in Bibliography* vol. 35, pp. 1-42 (1982).

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Quinti Horatii Flacci Opera* (London: John Pine, 1733-37).

<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Peignot, *Répertoire de Bibliographis Spéciales, Curieuses et Instructives* (Paris: Renouard and Allais, 1810), 185-210.

<sup>5</sup> C. Lucas de Peslouan, "L'Art du Livre Illustré au XVIIIe Siècle." *Arts et Métiers Graphique Paris*, no. 24, 304-308 (July 1931).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Fuhring, "The Print Privilege in Eighteenth-Century France — I." *Print Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 175-193 (September 1985).

<sup>7</sup> Michael J. Suarez, "The Reach of Bibliography: Looking Beyond Letterpress in Eighteenth-Century Texts." 2015 Lyell Lecture, April 28, 2015, Bodleian Library. Podcast link: <http://blogs.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/theconveyor/2015/05/05/the-reach-of-bibliography-looking-beyond-letterpress-in-eighteenth-century-texts/> (accessed February 18, 2016).

<sup>8</sup> *Annuaire Historique pour l'Année 1839*, (Paris: Jules Renouard et Cie, 1838), pp. [25] and 43.

<sup>9</sup> *Biographie Universelle Ancienne et Moderne Supplément*, vol. 63 (Paris: L.-G. Michaud, 1837), p. 183.

<sup>10</sup> <http://les.guillotines.free.fr/guilloda.htm>. (accessed February 17, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famille\\_de\\_Montesson](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Famille_de_Montesson) (accessed February 18, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> A. Angot, *Dictionnaire Historique, Topographique et*



Fig. 9. Text illustration "The Tax Office" (article author's title) from p. 61 of *La Science de l'Arpenteur*.

*Biographique de la Mayenne*. vol. 3 (Mayenne: Joseph Floch, 1962), pp. 81-83.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Twyman, *Early Lithographed Books*. (Williamsburg, VA: The Book Press Ltd, 1990), Chapter 3.



## An evening with Marvin Taylor and visiting Mellon Fellows



ABOVE Speaker Marvin Taylor. LEFT Rare Book School/Mellon Fellows and local hosts gather: Corinna Zeltsman, Jill Gage, Juliet Sperling, Barbara Heritage, Dahlia J. Porter, Donna Sy, Suzanne Karr Schmidt, Caroline Wigginton, Will Hansen, Catherine Uecker, Dan Meyer, Meghan Doherty, Stephanie Frampton, Sonja Drimmer, Elizaveta Strakhov, András Kiséry, Zachary Hines, Jackie Vossler, Benjamin J. Nourse, Alice Schreyer.

# Remembering Norma B. Rubovits, 1918-2016

Rob Carlson & Paul Gehl

Once again, we have lost a dear Caxtonian friend. Norma Rubovits has not been well enough to attend meetings for some time, but her quick wit and strong opinions enlivened many a dinner meeting over the years. She first came as a guest of her husband Frank, who joined the club in 1968. In those benighted years, women were allowed at only one meeting a year, so Norma had to wait until 1976 to become a regular, though still Frank's guest. After Frank's death in 1987, she attended frequently in the company of other members until Mary Beth Beal and Bruce Hubbard nominated her for her own membership in 1994.

Norma Rubovits was a lion in the paper marbling world and a first-rate bookbinder who often incorporated her own striking papers in remarkable bindings. Binding and marbling were not a profession for Norma, but an avocation that became a stellar artistic career. It started casually enough when, in 1964, Frank asked her if she wanted to take a book binding class with him. A noted obstetrician, he had inherited his grandfather's collection of books, some of which were in bad condition; he wanted to learn to repair and rebind

One of Norma's "vignettes."



them. Norma thought it was a wonderful idea, and accompanied him to classes with master binder Elizabeth Kner. Soon she found herself drawn to the marbled papers often used for covers and endpapers, and she taught herself to marble. Her researches led her to the Newberry Library, beginning a lifelong mutual admiration society. Norma and the Newberry marched hand in hand right up to her last days. The library gave her a career retrospective in 2010.

Early on, Norma's innate curiosity and rejection of accepted wisdom led her to push the limits of paper marbling.

Not content to continue to produce sheet after sheet of spectacular but

similar papers, she began to experiment with the form, taking a small "swirl" of marbling and turning it into a work of art in its own right. She presented these as "doodles" at first, but eventually settled on the term "vignettes." She produced thousands of them. Many of Norma's marbles – full sheets from every period and hundreds of vignettes – can be seen and studied today at the Newberry. In 1992, she downsized and moved from Sandberg Village to what was then the Hallmark at Lake Shore Drive and Oakdale. At that time she donated hundreds of books and bindings and her entire collection of her own and others' marbled papers. The collection has continued to grow through her continuing generosity and by gifts from others

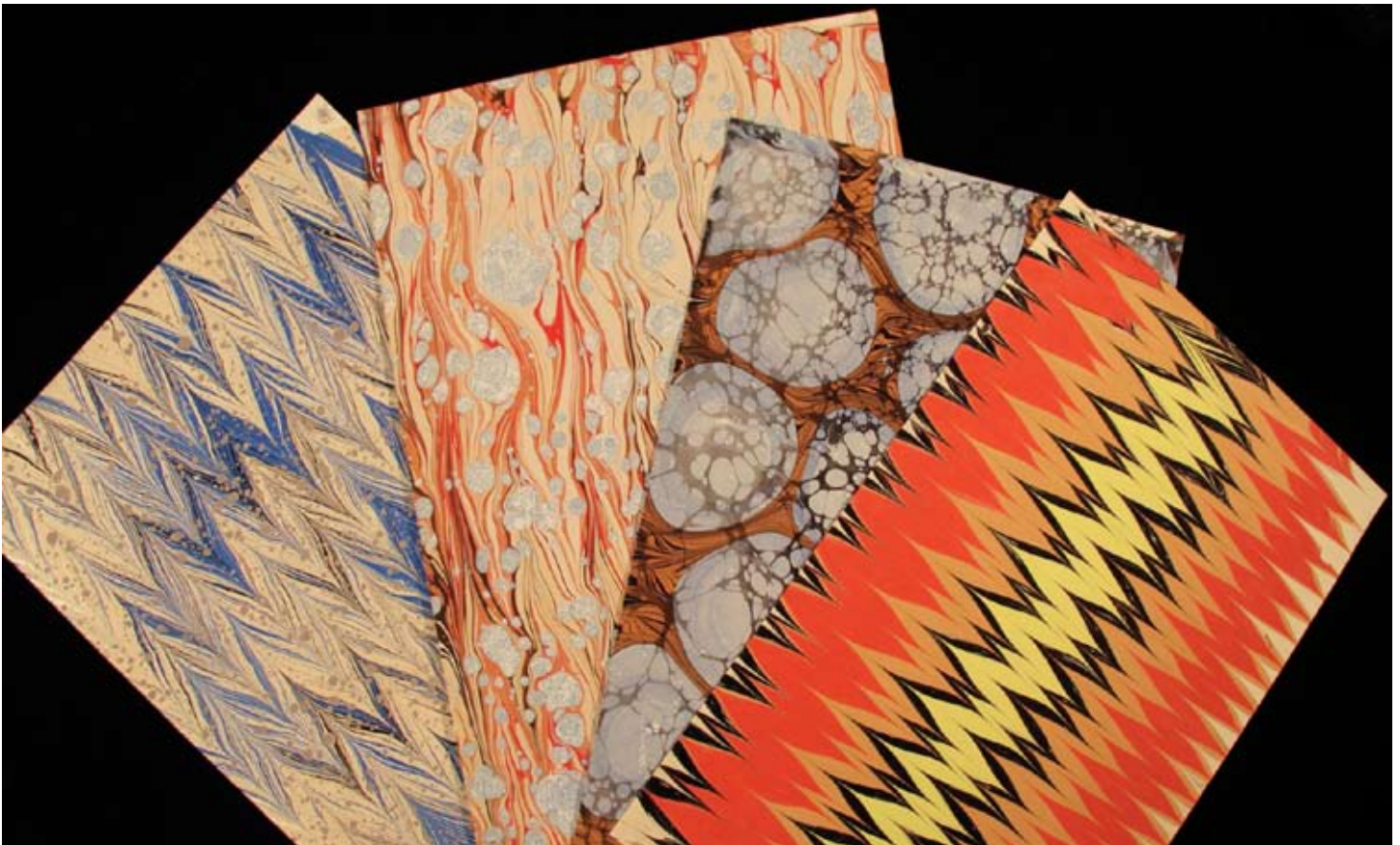


Norma Rubovits in 2006.

– both artists and collectors – in her honor.

Norma was famous in the book arts world of Chicago for her curiosity, inventiveness, and generosity. Calligrapher Robert Williams took Elizabeth Kner's classes with Norma and Frank. He recalls that Norma was so eager to have expert information on the art of marbling that she commissioned at least one translation from German, back in the days when there was little available in English. Williams also recounts, "When Norma and Frank returned from their first trip to Turkey they presented everyone in the class with a sheet of original Turkish ebru, probably the first time any of us had seen this amazing type of marbling." Much of Norma's collection of papers was acquired by exchange – a sheet or two of hers for comparable sheets from artists she admired. Her many artist pals (Caxtonians





Marbled paper by Norma Rubovits.

Bob Williams and Bill Drendel among them, along with Wisconsin fine printer Walter Hamady) used her papers in sculptures, paintings, and collages or worked hand in hand with her on bindings. It's always fun to spot her distinctive papers in other bindings too. Caxtonian binders Bill Minter and Ernest Mond were fans. Local conservator and binder Robin Zurawski treasured Norma's professional advice and encouragement. She adds, "After we became friends, Norma offered me some of her 'seconds,' marbled sheets that were imperfect. I thought she had made a mistake and was offering me perfect sheets. Norma handed me a magnifying glass and showed me where sometimes only one small air bubble had left a tiny void in the pattern—marbling not up to Norma's standards, but a treasured gift for my own binding."

Right into her late 90s, Norma was a *bonne vivante*, happy for a good meal, a sip of wine, or something to satisfy her considerable sweet tooth. The authors of this remembrance tried to keep her well supplied with coffee-flavored hard candies. Imagine her dismay (and ours) when Fannie May stopped making them! Bill Drendel, another regular visitor, remembers, "She loved chocolate and I always tried to have a morsel or three for her when I visited. If I took her a box, she would insist that I wanted

a piece—so that she could open it and start on it herself!"

Norma Rubovits (née Bloch) was born on August 26, 1918, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and died March 16, 2016, in Chicago at age 97. She came to Chicago at age 21 to enroll in the dietitian program at Michael Reese. She later worked at the University of Chicago Hospitals. At Michael Reese she met Frank Rubovits, of a long and distinguished Chicago family (that even included a printer!). They married in 1941 and raised two daughters: Paula, an artist and model, and Randi, a psychiatrist. Frank died in 1987, Paula in 1988; Norma is survived by her brother George Bloch and daughter Randi Rubovits-Seitz.

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In her studio in 1969.

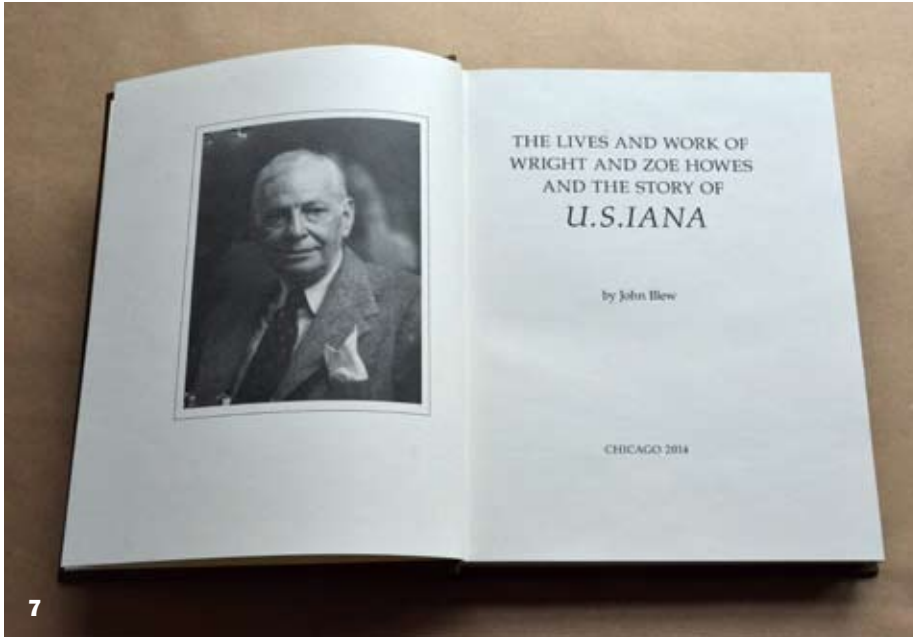
# Member Show 'n' Tell

Caxtonians who have written and created books tell their stories on March 11



The March luncheon was a chance for Caxtonians who had created books to talk about them. **1** Junie Sinson, John Blew, and Don Chatham talk. **2** As usual, Doug Fitzgerald kept the event lively. **3** John Roberts. **4** Caryl Seidenberg explained her creative process. **5** Craig Jobson. **6** Matthew Doherty and John Chalmers in discussion.



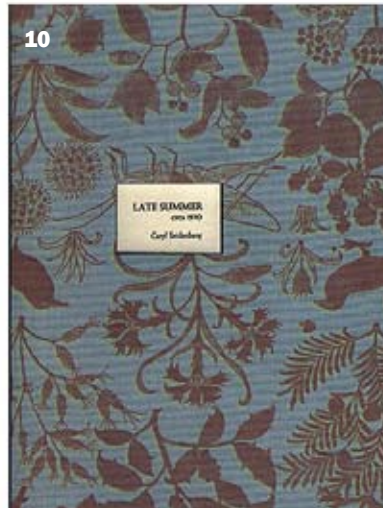


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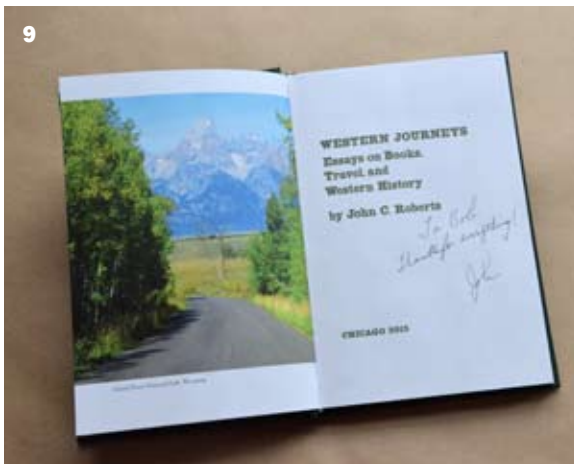
**7** John Blew's history of U.S.IANA.  
**8** Craig Jobson's *The Billy Chronicles*.  
**9** John Roberts' *Western Journeys*.  
**10** Cover and endsheet from *Late Summer 1970* from Caryl Seidenberg's *Vixen Press*. **11** Promotional piece for the Hesterberg Press's *Old Woman and the Empty Cask*.



8



10



9

*Announcing A Fable For All Ages ~ The Old Woman & The Empty Cask.*

This new work by the Hesterberg Press is printed letterpress with Bulmer types in black and red on Rives Heavyweight deckle paper. Along with the laid in fable print by Middleton, two Bewick vignette blocks are printed directly from the wood. Seventy-two copies were cast bound in a dark purple Japanese cloth with a gold stamped paper label and colored end papers by the Campbell-Lagan Bindery. Sixty-five numbered copies of this twenty page book are available at \$75 each, plus shipping. (Limited dealer discount)

**11**

*Pictured above: Cropped deckle Pages 2 & 3; Introduction and Middleton's print with the Fable. Hesterberg Press, 1225 Greenwood, Evanston, IL 60201 • email: bill\_hesterberg@ihg-global.net*

# 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.)

**Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library**, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Orchidology: Orchidaceous Investigations”** (rare book exhibition featuring volumes of orchid illustrations), through May 8. **“Language of Flowers: Floral Art and Poetry”** (small books with poetic floral lexicons), opens May 14.

**Chicago Cultural Center**, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: **“Librería Donceles”** (traveling Spanish language bookstore conceived by artist and educator Pablo Helguera that points out the lack of access to books in Spanish), Garland Gallery, through May 29. **“Stand Up for Landmarks!”** (posters and pictures in a new permanent exhibit), first floor south.

**Chicago History Museum**, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Lincoln’s Undying Words”** (how his changing views toward slavery transformed America), Mazza Foundation Gallery, ongoing. **“Vivian Maier’s Chicago”** (images of everyday life in urban America), through July 2017.

**Harold Washington Library Center**, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: **“Called to the Challenge: The Legacy of Harold Washington”** (an overview of Washington’s life and projects as mayor), Harold Washington Exhibit Hall, ninth floor, ongoing.

**Loyola Museum of Art**, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-915-7600: **“William Castellana: South Williamsburg”** (photos of Hasidic life in Brooklyn), through July 23.

**Newberry Library**, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“Juried Exhibition of the Chicago Calligraphy Collective”** (the group’s 30th anniversary show), through June 24, accompanied by an exhibit of recent Newberry calligraphic acquisitions.

**Northwestern University Block Museum**, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: **“Don’t Throw Anything Out: Charlotte Moorman’s Archive”** (papers of performance art pioneer and avant-garde impresario Charlotte Moorman), through July 17.

**Pritzker Military Museum and Library**, 104 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“SEAL The Unspoken Sacrifice”** (features photographs from Stephanie Freid-Perenchio and Jennifer Walton’s 2009 book and artifacts on loan from the Navy SEAL Museum), ongoing.

**University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery**, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: **“Integrity of the Page: The Creative Process of Daniel Clowes”** (notes, outlines, narrative drafts, character sketches, draft layouts, and more from the noted cartoonist, graphic artist, and scriptwriter), through June 17.

Send your listings to Lisa Pevtzow at [lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net)

Newberry Library / Chicago Calligraphy Collective  
UNTITLED, BY KATHY MANDELL



Chicago History Museum / Lincoln’s Words  
MUSEUM GRAPHIC



Northwestern U. Block Gallery /  
Charlotte Moorman Archive  
CHARLOTTE MOORMAN PERFORMS JIM  
McWILLIAMS’S “ICE MUSIC FOR SYDNEY,”  
ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, 1976.  
PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN. COURTESY OF  
KALDOR PUBLIC ART PROJECTS.



Univ. of Chicago Regenstein /  
Daniel Clowes  
AN EXHIBIT CASE



# Caxtonians Collect: Junie Sinson

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

The Caxton Club can be grateful for the many years of service Junie Sinson has given us. He joined in 2000, and by 2005 we had elected him President. During his presidency, he inaugurated the Caxton/Newberry symposiums with the help of an outstanding committee. He long chaired our Nobel Prize Committee, and an informal literary group still meets under his leadership. He saw the Club through a rewrite of our bylaws, and oversaw the creation of our first policies and procedures manual.

He was born in Oak Park and grew up there. (As did his wife, Dorothy. They knew of each other while still in high school, but didn't really click together until both of them attended Beloit College. We'll interview her next month.) At Beloit he was not content with a single

major. He chose English because he was so at home with reading and writing, and economics because he wanted to know about money and business, as there had been no talk of it in his childhood. Comfort combined with challenge seems to be a recurring theme in his life.

After graduation, he went on to law school at Northwestern and was admitted to the bar in 1957. He practiced law for 54 years, and retired five years ago at age 80. At the start, he thought he would like securities law, but soon discovered he was good at trying cases, so for the remainder of his career he represented clients in trials of many sorts. At first, ordinary tort cases were his bread-and-butter. A brief stint as city prosecutor for Arlington Heights exposed him to criminal law. Then he discovered he was good at representing business-people in their conflicts with governmental agencies; he did quite a bit of that.

In the end, he discovered that his true gift was teasing out the real facts in difficult cases, especially in product liability and medical malpractice. I got the impression that "dogged" would not be a misleading adjective to describe his efforts at discovering what went wrong when a helicopter fell out of the sky or

a patient died on an operating table.

He had an early case with a client who developed Parkinson's disease after being hit by a CTA bus. Sinson himself became convinced that the events were related, but he was unable to find a doctor who was willing to get on the stand and so testify, though some medical professionals had begun to become



Sinson, left, speaks with Göran Malmqvist (of the Swedish Academy) and his son Scott at the 2007 Caxton/Newberry Symposium.

suspicious. He was eventually proved right.

Another case he recalls where he was ahead of the curve involved cancer risk to women from high doses of estrogen. The drug companies started cutting back on dosages after he lost a case where he was probably right – again because it was difficult to find a doctor to testify.

His good relations with doctors led to his representing some in litigation. "A doctor would come to me after the lawyer assigned by his malpractice insurance carrier seemed to be holding back on the defense. The insurer just wanted to settle, but the doctor wanted to be vindicated," he explained.

The largest office he ran included 17 people. He never went to work for a larger firm; that allowed him to be in charge of his own destiny.

Junie and Dorothy have three sons; two are attorneys and the third is a neurosurgeon in Milwaukee.

One of Sinson's most rewarding activities in retirement has been writing his autobiography. "I'm a real saver," he said, "so I had everything to refer to: diaries, report cards, income tax returns. I wanted to do it so my grandchildren would know something about me." (Copies are

not available to the public.)

Though he is an avid "recreational" collector of several things, he rejects terms like "pack rat." When he starts to collect, a "completist" gene kicks in. He has 18th-century English wine glasses, autographs, Chinese ceramics, and Japanese tea cups. (The problem with the last two, he admits, is that the original boxes they came in are an important part of the collection. So even though he can spread out the items themselves on shelves for admiration, he has to allocate considerable additional space to storing boxes.)

In the paper world, after a childhood collecting stamps, he grew into his main collecting field, the Nobel Prize for Literature. He has countless editions of Nobel winners' acceptance speeches, which sometimes appear in many languages and forms. He contributed

an article to the Club's *Other People's Books* on an outstanding possession: an association copy of a play by Nobel laureate Gerhart Hauptmann given by Hauptmann to a Peace Prize laureate, Bertha von Suttner. The bookseller who sold that book to him knew that Hauptmann was a prizewinner, but not that von Suttner was too.

Sinson runs a mile every weekday morning, but it used to be two. "The doctor told me there was something wrong with my heart and I had to stop running," he says, "but a life without exercise would be no life at all, so I just go slower." He's also an avid gardener, having created a Chinese-style garden in his yard in Elmhurst. "The doctor told me to cut back on the gardening, too, so I don't lift heavy things anymore," he concludes.

His favorite Caxton activity was the Nobel Prize group. Members read conceivable candidates and discussed them, then narrowed their choice till they had a nominee. Robin Metz, of Knox College, would then make the official nomination on behalf of the committee. On two occasions the club nominees (J. M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer) won the prize.

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## Bookmarks...

**Luncheon: Friday, May 13, Union League Club**  
**The Dangerous Years: Rich Cahan on Richard Nickel's**  
**Quest to Save Chicago's Most Distinctive Buildings**

Saying that someone "gave his life to defending Chicago's most important and distinctive buildings" would usually be hyperbole. But when applied to Richard Nickel, photographer, preservationist, and salvager of architectural elements, it would be literally true. Nickel was gathering pieces from the old Chicago Stock Exchange Building when it suddenly collapsed on him. Nickel left behind a remarkable legacy, captured in part in the book *Richard Nickel—Dangerous Years: What He Saw and What He Wrote*, coauthored by Richard Cahan. Join us for May's luncheon when Cahan will bring this crackling story to life as he discusses Nickel's life, letters, and photographs. This lavishly illustrated talk will take you to the Chicago of yesteryear, with its stunning buildings designed by Louis Sullivan, members of the Prairie School, and others.

Rich Cahan, author of a dozen books, is a wonderfully engaging speaker who has served as picture editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and is an independent scholar at the Newberry Library.

If you like stories of derring-do (clambering through buildings slated for or in various stages of destruction qualifies), of vanished buildings that made Chicago unique among cities, or of how passion for the arts preserves our history, this luncheon program is for you.

**May 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 \$32.  
Reservations or cancellations by noon Wednesday for Friday lunch. Call 312-255-3710 or e-mail [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org).

### Beyond May...

#### JUNE LUNCHEON

It's a signature Lake Shore Drive residential building, but more: the locus of a story of greed, power, corruption, and even murder. Richard Fizdale, who went from hippie protester to Chair of Leo Burnett, will talk about his stunning book *999 – A History of Chicago in Ten Stories* June 10 at the Union League Club.

**Dinner: Wednesday, May 18, 2016, Union League Club**  
**Michael Thompson on**  
**"The Book in Contemporary American Art"**

Michael Thompson is a lawyer, past President of the Caxton Club, member of the Council of the Bibliographic Society of America, a trustee of the Newberry Library, and chair of the Library Society at the University of Chicago. A noted book collector, he is also owner of Boreas Fine Art and a dealer in artists' books. He will discuss the evolution of books made by artists and the divergent paths that have been followed by books in the fine press tradition and the fine art tradition. These paths reflect today's world of conceptual art, where choice of medium has become of secondary importance and books themselves present fewer constraints for the artists who use them. Books, long viewed as the primary means by which to communicate ideas, now can take the form of a scroll, codex, score, patterned broadside, leporello, audio recording, manuscript, sketchbook or, most recently, electronic file. In fact, the book, in our contemporary worlds of art and communication, may be the irreducible essence of conceptual art: an idea without a fixed physical object.

**May Dinner:** Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard.  
The evening will follow this order: Social gathering: 5:00 - 6:00 pm.  
Program: 6:00 pm. Three-course dinner following the program. Drinks are \$5-\$9. Dinner is \$60. RESERVATIONS are required to attend the program only or the program/dinner combination. **Reservations MUST be received no later than NOON Monday, May 16, 2016.** Dinner CANCELLATIONS or no-shows made after this time will require payment. To reserve call 312-255-3710 or e-mail [caxtonclub@newberry.org](mailto:caxtonclub@newberry.org).

#### JUNE DINNER

June 15 at the Newberry Library, Theodore Crackel, former professor and editor in chief of the papers of George Washington at the University of Virginia, on "The Dispersal of George Washington's Papers." Our last meeting before the Club itself disperses for the summer.