

Q: What do Bill Cole, “Sabre-Tooth Revisited,” and The Crockett Almanacks have in common? A: The Caxton Club.

Jerry Morris

Bill Cole (1917-2011) was a member of the Caxton Club. “Sabre-Tooth Revisited” was the title of the discourse Bill Cole delivered before the Caxton Club on February 10, 1965.

The Crockett Almanacks, edited by Franklin Meine and published by the Caxton Club in 1955, was the book the Caxton Club presented to Bill Cole in appreciation for his “Sabre-Tooth Revisited” talk.

I have Bill Cole’s copy of the book!

I acquired it on eBay this past July. I had two reasons for wanting this book. One was Davy Crockett. As a kid, I watched Walt Disney’s miniseries Davy Crockett in 1954 and 55. Over 60 years later, I can still recite the words to the song: “Da-vy, Davy Crockett! King of the Wild Frontier...”

There are several things I should tell you right off about the original Crockett Almanacks. According to Crockett scholars, Davy Crockett (1786-1836) had nothing whatsoever to do with the Almanacks. To this day, scholars still do not know the identities of the authors, printers, or publishers of the early issues of the Almanacks. There was an S.N. Dickinson, who in 1840 claimed that his firm started the Crockett Almanacks, but scholars have never been able to substantiate that claim. The first four issues were printed in Nashville and are included in full in Franklin J. Meine’s book, *The Crockett Almanacks*, which was published by the Caxton Club in Chicago in 1955.

Meine himself calls the Crockett Almanacks “damn rare.” Only three or four complete sets of the Nashville imprints were known to exist when his book was published. The first four Nashville imprints,

however, were included in a collection of 21 Crockett Almanacks that were sold at auction by Dorothy Sloan Books on October 26, 2007. The price realized was \$58,750.

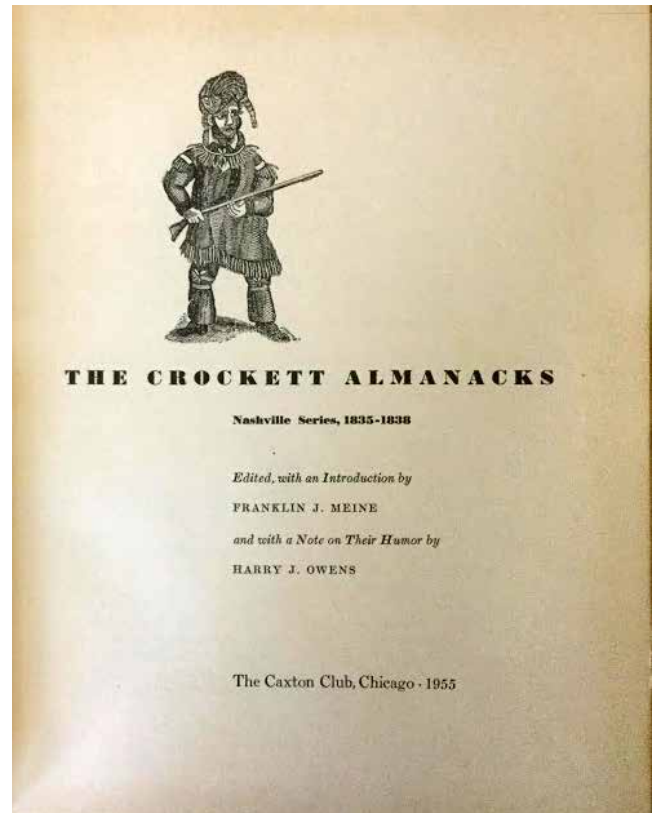
The story of finding these Crockett Almanacks sounds like something out of Rebecca Rego Barry’s *Rare Books Uncovered*. It seems that in 1947 there was a paper drive in Spencer, Iowa, to raise money to pay for uniforms for the high school band. A collector and his daughter found the Almanacks on the curb in front of a house. The daughter kept the Almanacks until the 2007 auction.

The other reason I wanted the book was because all the Caxton Club members who attended the meeting and listened to Bill Cole’s presentation signed the inscription sheets. And I am a bibliophile who readily recognizes some of the names!

A former owner of the book, possibly a Caxton Club member himself, identified some of the 59 signers on a slip of paper saved in the book:

Presentation copy to Bill Cole, From the Caxton Club, in thanks for his presentation on Feb. 10, 1965. Presentation folder with hand calligraphic inscription by James Hayes, the first signer, a noted calligrapher and bibliophile. 59 total signatures include:

Franklin J. Meine – editor of book



Title page of the Caxton Club publication of 1955.

Harry J. Owens – contributed essay on humor
Monroe F. Cockrell – Civil War historian and author

James R. and Robert G. Donnelly of the R.R. Donnelly Printing Co.

Frank W. Fetter – noted U of C economist and author

Carl Forslund – furniture manufacturer
Wilbert Seidel – artist and professor at Northwestern

Colton Storm – bibliographer at Newberry Library

Paul M. Angle – author, Illinois historical librarian, state historian

I can identify another of the signers: the bookbinder Harold W. Tribolet. I have

See CROCKETT ALMANACKS, page 2



CAXTONIAN

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CROCKETT ALMANACKS, from page 1

three books in the My Sentimental Library Collection from his library.

I liked the idea of the Caxton Club members signing the book. Now another bibliophile society is doing the same thing! As president of the Florida Bibliophile Society, I have presented books to the speakers at our meetings. I inscribed and signed each of them “on behalf of the Florida Bibliophile Society.” No more! For our September 16 meeting, we had not one but two books to present: one to our speaker Gary Simons and one to honor FBS founding member Lee Harrer’s 35 years in FBS. Our Vice President, Charles Brown, created perfect inscription sheets ready for signing by our members.

For Gary Simons, who is a Samuel Johnson collector, I chose *The World in Thirty-eight Chapters, or Dr. Johnson’s Guide to Life*, by Henry Hitchings. As a fellow Johnsonian, I knew he’d enjoy reading it.

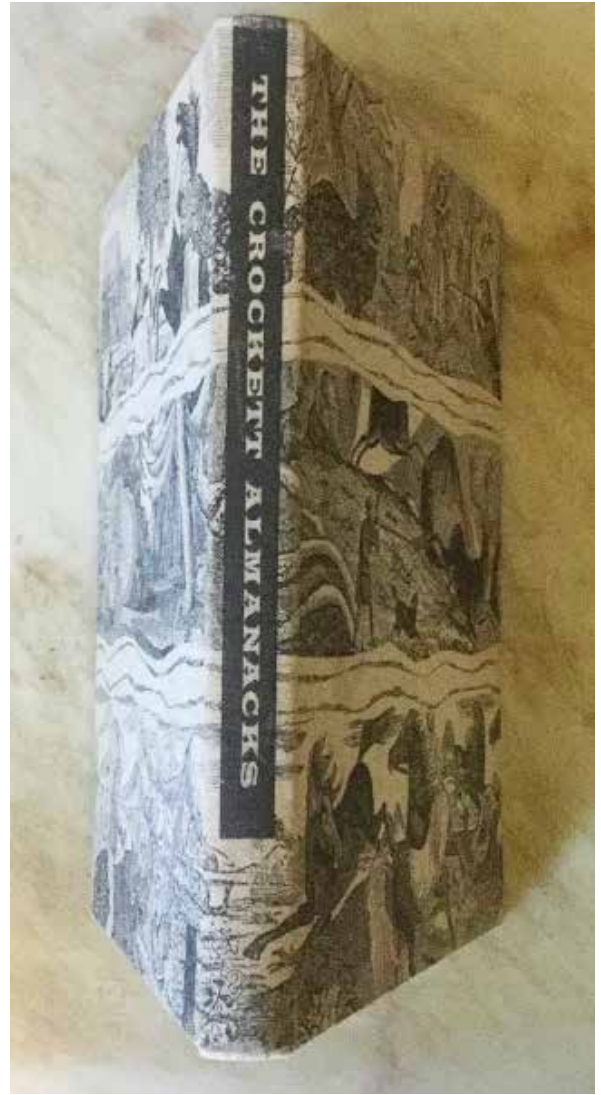
For Lee Harrer, I chose *The Mirror of the Library* by Konstantinos Staikos. It was published by Lee Harrer’s friend, the late Bob Fleck, founder of Oak Knoll Books. Bob even wrote the introduction, so I knew the book would have a sentimental value to Lee. (And yes, I checked with Oak Knoll to make sure that Harrer didn’t already have the book!)

When it comes to books, I am one for turning over every leaf – or at least as many leaves as I can. After reading the inscription on the Crockett book that the Caxton Club gave to Bill Cole, I wanted to learn more about him and the nature of his discourse, “Sabre-Tooth Revisited.” I sorted through a lot of Bill Coles to find the William G. Cole, who had had written “Sabre-Tooth Revisited.” I was happy to find that this article was printed in a 1965 issue of *Liberal Education: The Bulletin of the Association of American Colleges*.

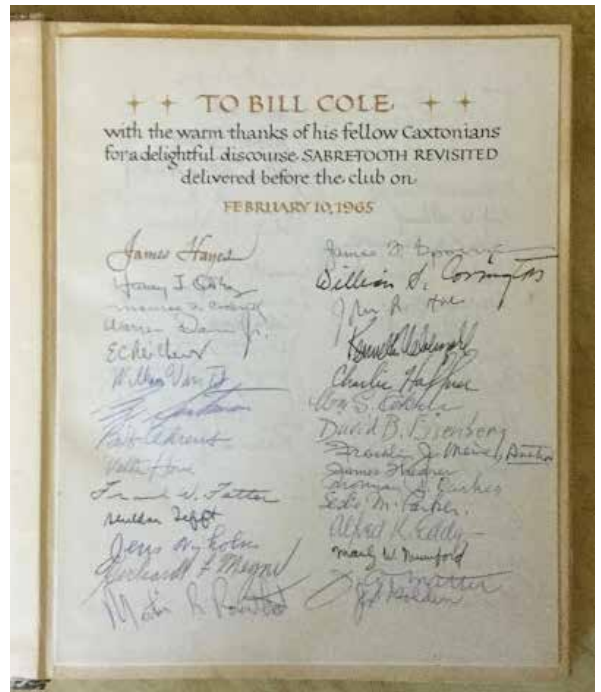
It is about education – “A plea to educators in pursuit of efficiency and subvention to remember what education is about” – and it is well worth reading. Some excerpts:

The Original Crockett Almanacks

A celebrity in his own time, Crockett was elevated to near-mythical status by his death at the Alamo in 1836.... He had courted fame while alive, and...he had taken an active role in the creation of his own overblown legend. His story, however, quickly became the property of



Presentation volume and inscription sheet signings for Bill Cole’s copy.



others. They greatly embellished the core of truth he had projected to create the archetypal backwoodsman and Jacksonian self-made man who captured the imagination of the world.”
 – Paul Hutton, historian

A Tongariferous Fight with an Alligator

When I first went to live on Bean Creek at the Mulberry fork of Elk River, in the spring of 1813, during the great freshets of that season when all the bayous were overflowed that lead from the Mississippi, but a short distance from our log house, there was a large, fathomless pool, called the ‘Alligator’s Sink,’ situated on the barrens, where the quantity of these monsters was so great that when they ascended in the spring from its unknown recesses, the whole circle was as full as a tub of eels.... We had some rageriferous fights with Alligators. For the infarnal critturs would get atop of our house, where the old bulls would have such fights, for the females that we could get no sleep at all. – *Davy Crockett’s Almanack*, 1839

The Almanacks included many regular features of almanacs, such as astronomical tables, sunrises, sunsets, calendars, and important dates. They were published from 1835 to 1856 and sold in many states. The stories often focused on animals, from their habits and habitats to the more outlandish encounters with enormous bears, gigantic panthers, and of course, 15- to 40-foot-long alligators. The language of the Almanacks is as colorful as the stories, which are written with arcane constructions, inventive words, and creative misspellings. Another excerpt:



Crockett Riding His Pet Bear up a Tree

If ever a set o’ blood-thirsty human critters were suddendaciously sucked an astonished to stupefaction, it was a party o’ Mexican scouts that go arter me an my barr ‘Death Hug,’ detarmined to take us both alive an exhibit us as the ninth wonder o’ creation. You see, I had jist mounted Death Hug, an were travellin at about twenty miles an hour, with some important news to General Houston, when a party o’ snake eyed Mexican scouts seed me comin, and commenced surroundin me for instanter captivation; they couldn’t bear the idea o’ killin two such tempten curiosities o’ natur, so they closed up with pinted gun prongs, thinkin to make us surrender in course; but I gin him a tickle under the fore paw, an he jumped clar over thar heads, an put off like a whirlwind. Dreckly a hull squad o’ twenty more headed us with thar gun prong help us so tarnal high that Death Hug couldn’t come it, but seein a hickory tree right between us, I jist wheeled Death Hug around instanterly, pinted up the tree, an take me for a two-legged Rhinoceros, if the crittur didn’t walk up that are trunk with me on his back about as slick as a painter goin up to roost, ran out the limb on to another tree, an another, an down agin, an then made off clar, jist as they was shootin into No. 1.

The best dog I ever had war named Teazer. Besides that I had Tearer, Holdfast, Deathmaul, Grim, Porcupine and



Cover, Davy Crockett’s Almanack, 1837, of Wild Sports in the West: Life in the Backwoods & Sketches of Texas. Crockett died in 1836 at the Battle of the Alamo. The Almanack carries a woodcut of Crockett and a pithy reduction of Crockett’s famous saying, “Always be sure you are right, then go ahead!”

Growler, that I’ve got now. Teazer was the best of the hull lot, and he died one day, bekase when I ordered him to dive in the Mississippi, I forgot to give him the word to come up to the top o’ the water, and he wouldn’t presume to put his nose above water without orders. He war the only dog I ever owned that was true grit; an the way he could throw a buffalo was astonishment to all my other dogs. He war in his eightieth year when he died.

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In the early years of the Almanac, stories tended to be folksier, but as it ran through the 1840s and 1850s, the tales became taller. The Almanack was last published in 1856. Alligators, along with many other wild beasts, appeared regularly in the Almanacks, with the requisite battle to subdue them. In this woodcut illustration, Crockett’s wife sits on the back of huge alligator which she has tied to a tree and beats with a pair of fireplace tongs. In the end, she cuts its throat with a butcher knife. That alligator messed with the wrong woman! The actual verified length of this beast, according to the Almanack, was 38 feet. Tongariferous, indeed.

Millard Riggs, 1942-2018

Millard Riggs died on Friday, November 19, 2018, in his present hometown of Princeton, New Jersey. We repeat an interview done by Robert McCamant ten years ago.

Even though Millard Riggs spent only four years of his career living in the Chicago area, he counts Caxtonians and Chicago book dealers as among the major influences in his life. "When I look at my library – first edition books, manuscripts, photographs, and associated antiquities – the connections come back to me. I would be a very different person without my Chicago experiences."

But we're getting ahead of the story. Riggs is a native of North Carolina. He studied organic chemistry at Duke. "In a way, the collecting bug bit me while I was a student," he explained, and continued:

I was always envious of my friends in the liberal arts. While I was going off to the lab for hours of experiments, they were sitting around talking and reading. I started collecting in a small way just to have a window on their world...

At first I would simply pore over book review sections to see what was being written about. Then I met the late Atlanta book dealer Dan Abrams, who expanded my view of collecting. He taught me the importance of waiting for just the right copy of a book, the one in the right condition with the right associations."

By the time Riggs came to the Chicago area in the 1970s, he had already started on his collection of U.S. presidential manuscripts. (His then-employer, Celanese Corporation, had purchased a subsidiary, and sent him to manage the chemical division.) He had a particularly choice Washington manuscript, a 3-page ALS letter to Governor Morris of Pennsylvania on his reason for moving the troops to Valley Forge. Abel Berland chanced to hear of the letter from the Atlanta dealer, who put him in touch with Riggs.

"Abel wanted that letter. I even let him borrow it for appraisal in Boston. In the end, I kept it. It just was not for sale." But it was the start of a friendship with Abel, who soon invited him to visit the Caxton Club at one of its meetings atop the First National Bank building, in the then-new Mid-Day Club. He joined the Club in 1974. "Abel also introduced

me to the many wonderful book dealers in Chicago: Frances Hamill and Margery Barker, Ralph Newman's Abraham Lincoln Bookshop, Terrence Tanner.

With so many antiquarian places to browse, my book collection became a larger part of my life."

Riggs traces the start of his Sandburg collection to Hamill and Barker. Then, as now, Sandburg was easier to collect than his contemporary Frost. Riggs has many of Frost's early publications, all first edition presentation copies. "A man of modest means, such as myself, could build an excellent Sandburg collection. I was able to acquire the manuscript and galley proofs of *The War Years* with the help of Frances Hamill. I literally carried them out of her shop in my suitcase. Who knows what library would have them today if she hadn't gotten me to overextend myself."

He tells a similar story about his Joshua Speed pamphlets. "I was in Ralph Newman's new shop, looking them over. Newman excused himself to take a call. "That was Malcolm Forbes," he explained when he came back. "He's very interested in the pamphlets with the association to Lincoln's first trip West." That was just the push it took to get me to take the leap. I've often wondered whether it really was Malcolm Forbes on the phone." But Riggs clearly does not regret his purchase.

Another fond memory of the Caxton Club is the late chef Louis Szathmary. "I visited the Bakery on a trip back to Chicago. He came out and recognized me as a Caxtonian. I mentioned that I had none of his cookbooks in my library. He went in back and came out with a first edition of his *Chef's Secret Cookbook*, which he inscribed to me."

When Riggs moved back to the east coast, it was largely his Chicago connections that put him in touch with the New York collecting world. Abel Berland proposed Riggs for membership in the Grolier Club, and his seconders were John Fleming and Bill Scheide, both friends he made through Abel.

It was in Princeton that Riggs resolved that

his library – while eclectic – must be one-of-a-kind editions that could not be duplicated. This is no more exemplified than by his Woodrow Wilson ALS, written the night before Wilson signed the League of Nations treaty. This unpublished letter is housed with several of Wilson's early signed first edition/presentation copies.

Riggs no longer works in organic chemistry. Currently he's at a major investment firm, managing the portfolios of private clients. "It is a better job for a book collector," he says. "The hours are more flexible, and the income means I no longer have to go into debt when I find something I want for my collection."

Riggs has built his collections in a remarkably wide range of areas. In addition to presidential manuscripts, the Civil War,

and Sandburg, he has Margaret Mitchell signed first editions, Harriet Beecher Stowe, annotated-first-edition Federalist papers and a first-edition Johnson's dictionary. Just when you think you've found a common thread in his collections – Early Americana – he mentions that he has a fair amount of Thackeray, Ripton, Dickens, and several incunables. "Sometimes guests to my residence in Princeton think I have more books than needed," he admits. In particular, the stacks of books outside the bathroom door attract comment. "But it's not really possible to have too many books. If you have the gene for book collecting, you really cannot help yourself. It's a madness."

He's still in the collecting phase, but he has given some thought to where his books will go in the end. "The one thing I can say with certainty is that they will not go en bloc to a large library. The great private libraries have more books than they know what to do with. I don't want the books I spent so much effort and enjoyment in acquiring to end up in the third sub-basement of some institution."

Perhaps, like Berland, he will put his books up for sale, so that a new group of collectors can enjoy them. He mentions Grolier friend Hal Friedlander, who sold his collection at the height of the market in 2000 and has been buying a few of his own books back as they appear on the market for less. "That must be a most satisfying thing to do!" Riggs concludes. Meanwhile, the search for one-of-a-kind collectibles continues.

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Wanda Dole, 1942-2018

Caxtonian Wanda Victoria Dole passed away November 23 after a brief illness.

She graduated from Lawrence University (of Appleton, Wisconsin) with a bachelor of arts, magna cum laude, in classics. She received a master of arts in classics from Tufts University and a master of science in library science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

She held library positions at the University of Kentucky, the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Miami (Florida), Abington College Library (Penn State University), the State University of New York Stony Brook, and Washburn University. She was the dean of the Ottenheimer Library at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock when she retired. Subsequently she was the Interim Director of Library Services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

Wanda was very active professionally. She held committee appointments in the American Library Association for many years including elected terms on the ALA Council. She was also an official ALA representative to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. In her role as chair of the IFLA statistics section, she served on the IFLA governing board and the IFLA professional committee.

A highly regarded speaker, she authored many publications. Her areas of expertise

included strategic planning and assessment as well as quantitative analysis. She spoke at many national and international conferences. Wanda also volunteered as a member of the archives and records management committee of the Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, and served



on the vestry of Chicago's Church of the Ascension.

She traveled widely for work and pleasure, enjoying good food and drink with friends around the world. She relished the experience of being in a foreign culture. After falling in love with opera while living in Italy as a graduate student, she maintained a subscription to the Lyric Opera of Chicago for many years. Possessing impeccable taste in everything, she prized her extensive collection of Puerto Rican santos.

Don Krummel wrote the following appreciation:

With Wanda's death our library community loses a quiet but very strong member. I remember her coming to library school convinced that her earlier work had not been quite what she wanted, and that in libraries she would be happy; and I think she was. Her assignments in my classes were

outstanding. I suspect her later work in academic libraries left a trail of colleagues and students who greatly admired what she was. I never understood why she chose to go to Springfield, but talking to her later at the Caxton Club made it clear that she was happy being active doing good things. She was quiet, but memorable; I am proud to have been part of her life.

Michael Gorman, who knew her better than most of us, had this to say:

I knew Wanda Dole for more than 40 years. She was a student in the library school at the University of Illinois when I taught there in the 1974-75 academic year. Thereafter, I worked with Wanda on a number of ALA committees and projects and during her work in academic libraries and when she worked for Blackwell's, where we had a number of mutual friends. I saw Wanda socially over the years and always enjoyed her company. She had an adventurous spirit and was always a lively and interesting companion. After she retired from the University of Arkansas and moved to Chicago, I lunched with Wanda regularly and very much enjoyed our conversations about books, travel, food, and our long mutual professional history. I was shocked and saddened by her sudden death and miss her very much.

A Requiem Mass was celebrated December 7, 2018, at the Church of the Ascension in Chicago, where she was an active member, particularly involved in sacred music there. This remembrance has been adapted from one circulated by the church.

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Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago

February 7: Caxton On The Move

A Curated Tour With Optional Private Dinner.

The tour, led by Caxtonian and curator of the exhibition Doug Litts, will highlight items featured in Chicago By The Book that are held by Ryerson and Burham Libraries. Register online!

Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

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

American Writers Museum, 180 N. Michigan Avenue, second floor, Chicago, 312-374-8790: **“Bob Dylan: Electric”** (Dylan’s influence on American music, literature, and culture), through April 30. **“Frederick Douglass, Agitator”** (exploring the writer and “self-made man”), through May 31.

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: **“Photography + Books: Out of the Retina, Into the Brain”** (Aaron and Barbara Levine’s Washington, D.C., home and its contents as a great art library), Gallery 1-4, through March 17. **“Conserving Photographs”** (a look at the museum’s collection through a conservator’s eyes), Gallery 10, through April 28.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Picturing Tropical Orchids”** (hand-colored engravings), through March 24.

Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington Street, Chicago, 312-744-6630: **“Cecil McDonald, Jr.: In the Company of Black”** (photographs by the artist and educator of people he describes as “extraordinarily ordinary”), Chicago Rooms, second floor north, through April 14.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Modern by Design”** (Chicago streamlines America), continuing.

Intuit Museum of Outsider Art, 756 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, 312-243-9088: **“Chicago Calling: Art Against the Flow”** (themes embodied in the works of ten Chicago artists), through February 10.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-

Northwestern University Transportation Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658: **“On Board with Design”** (passenger transportation in the mid-20th century) e-mail transportationlibrary@northwestern.edu to schedule an appointment.

Pritzker Military Museum and Library, 104 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“Lest We Forget: Sailors, Sammies, and Doughboys Over There in World War I”** (explores the experiences of those who served in the war), through March 31.

Spudnik Press Cooperative, 1821 W. Hubbard Street, suite 302, Chicago, 312-563-0302: **“Non-Constants: Ashley Freeby & Jesse Meredith”** (work by the two artists around and through each other’s experiences), through March 16.

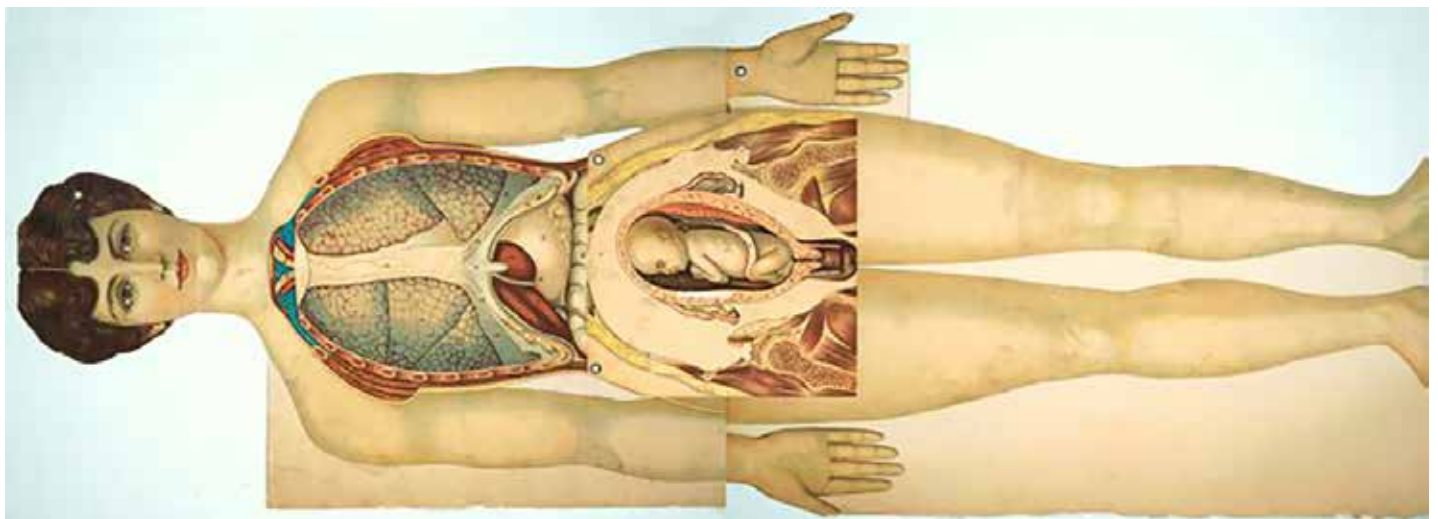
University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library, Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 E. 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: **“The Fetus in Utero: From Mystery to Social Media”** (the uterus depicted over 500 years, from Renaissance woodcuts to modern medical images), second floor, through April 12.

Contact Bob McCamant (bmccamant@earthlink.net) if you’d like to take over the preparation of our listings.

Art Institute/Out of the Retina

THE LEVINES’ HOME, 2018.

ASSAF EVRON. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.



280-2660: **“Laurie Simmons: Big Camera/Little Camera”** (four decades of work will be on display), opens February 23.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“Melville: Finding America at Sea”** (the author’s interests in democracy, spirituality, morality, sexuality, etc.), through April 6.

University of Chicago/Fetus In Utero
PILZ ANATOMICAL MANIKIN

Caxtonians Collect: John Barrett

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

John Barrett is not a member of the Caxton Club. But he has been deeply involved in the Club's administration for the last several months as the expert hired by Jackie Vossler to bring our web site into the 21st century. In many respects, then, he knows more about us than we do ourselves!

Barrett hails from Rockford. He was the third child of a pedodontist and a homemaker. They met at Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa, and continued the relationship as his father went off to dental school at the University of Iowa. "We were one of those families that just 'got along,'" is how he describes home life. He remains in close touch with his siblings, though one remains in Rockford as a physical therapist and one has moved to far-away Los Angeles, where he builds satellites. John and his family now live in River Forest.

As a kid, Barrett admits he "focused as much on athletics as academics." His sports were track, cross country, and swimming.

He was an eager adopter of computers, which was not always a good thing. He tells the story thus: "After being explicitly instructed not to use a computer to write a term paper in senior year honors English class (with the threat of a failing grade), I did exactly that, much to the disappointment of Ms. Kolas. She was convinced the computer would write the paper for me or some such. Based on the quality of the paper, maybe she realized that it probably did not write it for me and let me slide with a 'D----' which apparently allowed me to graduate so I could pursue a major in computer science at the University of Iowa."

He counts himself fortunate that the university located computer science in the liberal arts school. (It includes everything from rhetoric and theatre arts to biology, physics, and mathematics.) He especially enjoyed "religion, writing, and business, which I ultimately minored in." After completing his bachelor of science degree, he continued his studies at the University of Illinois working toward

an MBA. He continues, "Three quarters into completing my studies there in information systems and finance, I met my wife. Soon we had each landed jobs...me at Hewlett Packard in Palo Alto, and Cheryl at Grant Thornton in Chicago. This, as it turns out, led to a long term/distance relationship which ultimately resulted in me moving to Chicago after I

fully intentional, decision."

Then Montessori hit their lives. "When it came time to consider preschool for our children, we chose a Montessori school, Brickton Montessori, which turned out to be fateful as both Cheryl and I would follow our children into this world. I started volunteering my IT skills at the school and Cheryl eventually

made a career change, obtained her Montessori teaching certification and started teaching at the school. The head-of-school at our children's school started giving my name to the heads of other Montessori schools and a new market for my services gradually presented itself. My wife continued teaching at Brickton Montessori, starting by assisting them with finance and administrative roles and was eventually being hired by their board as head of school, where she continues today." (However, the kids moved on to Trinity High in River Forest for high school, precipitating the family's move there.)

Barrett says his favorite reading matter is *The Economist*. "Yes, I know that is not a book," he says. "I enjoy thinking about economics and public policy and why, ultimately, people look at the world, politics, and policy as they do. When I retire, I would like to spend more time reading/writing on these subjects using data/results to discuss policy and attempting to reconcile people's

seemingly disparate views to some understanding of the world that most people, at least, can agree with."

In spite of his line of work, he is still devoted to words on paper. "I think the unique experience of giving/sharing a physical manifestation of ideas with others is what I like." And paper books have an advantage while parenting, too: "I truly enjoyed being able to slip a book onto my daughters' bookshelves that I felt would be valuable or enjoyable to them... knowing they would eventually come across it without me specifically recommending it... which at certain times during their teen years would have ruled it out as a read."

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admitted that I eventually wanted to move back to Chicago anyway to be closer to my family."

They picked "an apartment on Marine Drive near Irving Park overlooking the golf course and worked 'like dogs' (as my wife would say) with me then at Deloitte doing IT consulting work."

At Deloitte, "When it was time to apply for partnership, I decided it was time to part ways with Deloitte. Selling and promising things I would not personally be delivering was not something I was ready to do. For a few years, Cheryl and I took turns doing independent consulting and being home with our daughters. It turned out to be a wonderful, if not



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Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Friday, February 8, Union League Club
Mark Canuel on Frankenstein and the Famous Circle

Lost among Boris Karloff's grunts and Gene Wilder's rendition of "Puttin' On the Ritz" is another more astonishing tale. Imagine a young woman, just 18, and the remarkable literary circle that inspired her to begin a novel that has been in print for just over 200 years. That's the story you'll hear from Mark Canuel, a professor of English and director of the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Much published, his books include *The Shadow of Death: Romanticism, Literature, and the Subject of Punishment*. Professor Canuel will invite you into a house near Geneva, Switzerland, on a cold and rainy afternoon during the midst of the terrifying "year without summer", as Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and others gathered and were challenged to write a horror story. Mary was galvanized (and perhaps you'll learn why galvanized is just the right word), wrote a story, expanded it to a novel, and launched an enduring tale of terror. We're a little late for the novel's publication anniversary, but that won't stop us from having cake for dessert. There will be cake!

February luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Blvd. Buffet at 11:30 am; program 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$35. Program free but please let us know you're coming. Reservations or cancellations for lunch by noon Wednesday the week of the luncheon. Reserve at caxtonclub.org, call 312-255-3710, or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

Beyond February...

MARCH LUNCHEON

What could be better than Paris in the early spring? So come and hear Paris Schutz, reporter, producer, interviewer on WTTW – where you regularly see him on *Chicago Tonight*. He'll be talking about the books that inform Chicago politics Friday, March 8, at Union League.

MARCH DINNER

John Crichton, of Brick Row Book Shop, San Francisco, is Chair of Rare Book School's Board and former president of the ABAA and Book Club of California. John will speak on Anton Roman, Bavarian immigrant to California during the Gold Rush and pioneering book-seller and publisher of the American West. March 20, Union League.

Dinner: Wednesday, February 20, Newberry Library
Guided Tour and Talk at Newberry's Melville Exhibit

2019 is the bicentenary year for Herman Melville, author of *Moby-Dick* and other classics of American literature. Will Hansen, curator of the Newberry Library exhibition "Melville: Finding America at Sea," will share some of the fascinating stories behind a few of his favorite books in the exhibition. From fine press to pulp paperbacks, from seafaring to self-taught artists, and from black tulips to white whales, this presentation promises to have something for every collector. The evening will begin with a curated tour of the exhibition.

February dinner: Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton. Nearby parking available. The evening will follow this order: Curated tour/social gathering 5-6:15 pm; program at 6:15 pm; three-course buffet dinner immediately to follow. Beverages available with coupon, \$2-5. Three-course buffet dinner with vegetarian options, \$63. The program is free and open to the public.

Reservations for program only or program dinner combination must be received no later than NOON on Monday, February 18. Payment will be required for dinner reservations cancelled after that time and for no-shows. Reserve at Caxtonclub.org; 312-255-3710; or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

APRIL LUNCHEON

As is our custom, the luncheon will be on spring break during April, but will return with a program on May 8 with Matthew Short on digitizing dime novels.

APRIL DINNER

On April 17 at the Union League Club Eric White, curator of rare books at Princeton University, will discuss his latest book *Editio Princeps: A History of the Gutenberg Bible* which recently won the DeLong Book History Prize.