

Blood and Thunder; or, A Very Brief History of the Dime Novel

Matthew Short

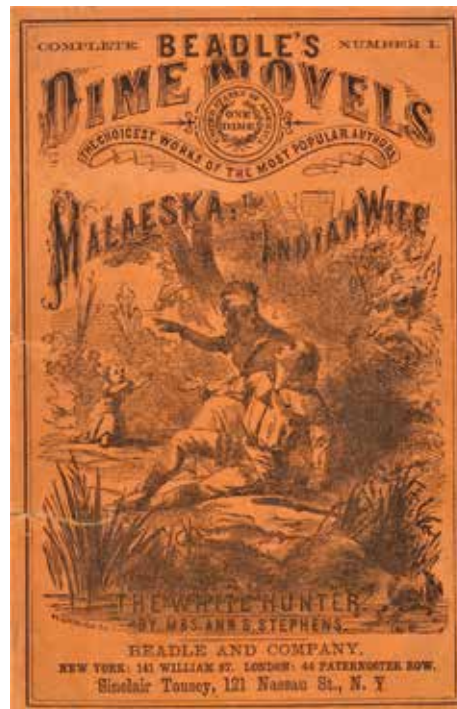
Between 1860 and 1933, publishers of cheap fiction in the United States produced thousands of what came to be known collectively as dime novels, a generic term for any inexpensive fiction in paper covers. Millions of dime novels were sold by subscription, or from newsstands, train stations, dry goods stores, and virtually anywhere other than bookstores. They were some of the earliest popular fiction in America and were where genres like the Western, the detective novel, and mass market romance first flourished. Many dime novels were not great literature, with formulaic plots and consisting chiefly of dialogue, and they often contained depictions of women and people of color that are problematic today. Despite these drawbacks, they deserve study largely because they featured so prominently in the everyday life of many Americans for more than half a century. There has recently been a resurgence of interest in the dime novel due to a wider recognition of the role the format played in the development of American popular literature, and as a result of large-scale digitization efforts making them easily available to scholars of the period. What follows is a brief history of this significant, but often neglected, part of American culture.

Formats

The term “dime novel” originated as a brand name created by the publisher Beadle & Adams for their first ten-cent fiction series, *Beadle’s Dime Novels*, which began in June of 1860 with Mrs. Ann S. Stephens’ *Malaeska, The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*. They were six by four inch duodecimo pamphlet-bound booklets of approximately 100 pages in orange wrappers, usually featuring lurid illustrations. Their first issues sold well over 100,000 copies, with each succeeding issue selling, on average, between 35,000 and 80,000 copies. The secret of Beadle’s success was not originality – Stephens’



Third Avenue, New York, newsstand with dime novels



Malaeska: The Indian Wife of the White Hunter

story originally appeared under the title *The Jockey Cap* in 1836 for her *Portland Magazine* and was later serialized in the *Ladies’ Home Companion* in 1839 – but the fact that their novels were cheap. Most clothbound fiction cost a dollar or more, equivalent then to a labor-

er’s wages for 12 hours of work, which put them out of reach of the lower and middle classes. At only 10 cents, anyone could afford to purchase a dime novel, even children. Success led to imitation, then to an evolution of the format as publishers competed for an audience that had a seemingly endless appetite for more inexpensive texts to read.

Under the umbrella of “dime novel,” collectors recognize several distinct formats, the most common of which is the “dime library,” sometimes also known as “black and whites.” First appearing in the 1870s with series like *Beadle’s Dime Library* and *Nickel Library*, they had illustrated black and white first pages and varied in size from octavo to quarto, containing as few as 16 pages and as many as 64. Each library consisted of one novella of around 20,000 words, with many also containing additional features, such as short stories or parts of serialized stories. By issuing their novels in series, publishers qualified for the lower second class postage rate for periodicals – the real reason that they were able to sell dollar novels for a dime. Later came the nickel weeklies, which had between 16 and 32 pages. Unlike the dime libraries, these novels, beginning with the first issue of *Tip Top Weekly* in 1890, had full-color wrappers. Additional features also became much more common, as dime novel publishers struggled to keep ahead of changing postal regulations.

The final manifestation of the dime novel was what collectors call “thick books,” containing between 100 and 300 pages. Though they sometimes featured original stories, more often these would be collections of previously published works, with three or four weeklies combined into a single thick book and presented as a new novel through the addition of connecting chapters. Street & Smith were the most prolific thick book publisher, issuing series like the *Merriwell Library* until 1933.

See BLOOD AND THUNDER, page 2



CAXTONIAN

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BLOOD AND THUNDER, from page 1

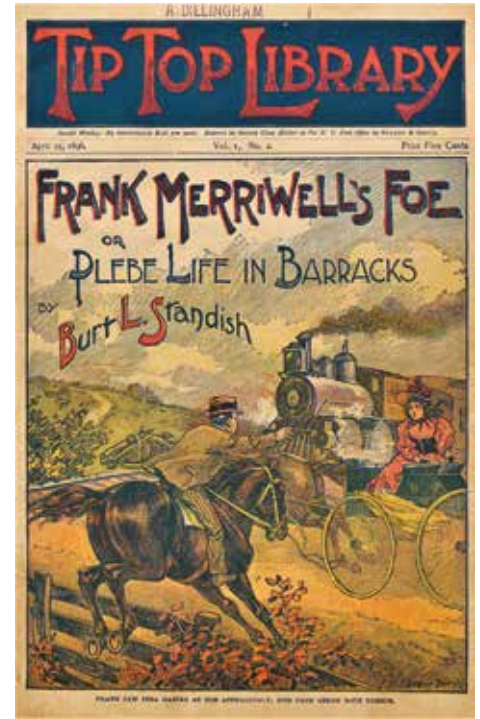
The story paper was a closely related format to the dime novel. It originated in the 1830s with the literary weeklies and mammoths, the latter so-called because they were the size of bedsheets. These resembled newspapers, but contained serialized stories, short stories, poetry, and editorial features. Story papers were issued by the same publishers who put out dime novels and often contained the same contents. In fact, many dime novels, libraries, and weeklies were reprints of stories that had been previously serialized in story papers. Publishers would continue to rely on story papers to fill the back pages of their weeklies throughout the dime novel era, with a short story that might have first appeared in a paper from 1870 showing up as filler in a weekly 40 years later. The format was extremely popular and would continue to be issued alongside the dime novel well into the 1920s. (For more on the history of the story paper, see Mary Noel's *Villains Galore*. Macmillan, 1954.)

While there were many factors that contributed to the demise of the dime novel, there is no question that motion pictures were the final nail in the coffin. For only a nickel, dime novel readers could see the same adventures acted out on the screen that they once found in their favorite reading. However, many of the dime novels' series, characters, and authors continued in film, radio, pulp magazines, and comic books. The dime novel may have died out in the early 1930s, but it would have a lasting influence over the mass media that followed.

Publishers

Dozens of publishers put out dime novels, but only five issued them in significant quantities for any length of time. The stories about the disagreements between these five are at least as entertaining as the novels they published, involving the same amount of family drama and betrayal.

Beadle and Adams, the publishers credited with originating the format, consisted of brothers Irwin and Erastus Beadle and partner Robert Adams. An exhaustive history of the firm can be found in Albert Johannsen's landmark bibliography *The House of Beadle and Adams and Its Dime and Nickel Novels* (Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1950). George Munro, a former employee, split off with Irwin Beadle in 1863 to form a rival company that published *Munro's Ten Cent Novels*, a series of dime novels in imitation of Beadle, and the *Fireside Companion*, a story paper that would introduce one of the format's most popular characters,



Tip Top Weekly

the detective Old Sleuth. George also had a brother, Norman Munro, who published dime novels and who had the bad habit of stealing his brother's ideas. He was also one of the most tireless self-promoters of the 19th century. While other publishers were emphasizing the high moral tone of their offerings, Norman Munro was proudly advertising that he printed only the spiciest tales of divorce and sex. But perhaps his greatest claim to fame is the series *Old Cap*. *Collier Library*, which was the first dedicated entirely to detective fiction. Norman Munro entered into partnership with Frank Tousey in 1873, who split off to form his own company three years later. Tousey published stories that were by far the most sensational and was also the first to target an adolescent male audience with his paper *Boys of New York*. Finally, there was Street & Smith, responsible for arguably the most popular characters in 19th century American fiction: the cowboy, Buffalo Bill; the detective, Nick Carter; and heroes of track and field, Frank and Dick Merriwell. They also introduced Mary J. Holmes to American readers. She would become one of the bestselling authors in the country, second only to Harriet Beecher Stowe in sales. Street & Smith transitioned into "slick" magazines, pulp magazines, and comics in the early 20th century, outlasting every other dime novel publisher by decades. They are probably better known today for series like *Doc Savage*, *The Shadow*, *Astounding Science Fiction*, and *Mademoiselle*.

Authors

Before the 1850s, most popular fiction in the United States was pirated from Europe. The “mysteries” of Eugene Sue were very popular, as were the works of Charles Dickens and Captain Frederick Marryat. Dime novel publishers continued to reprint English and French novels well into the 20th century. This piracy was common and extremely lucrative due to the absence of international copyright laws.

The 1850s saw the rise of the first literary celebrities, figures like E.D.E.N. Southworth, Sylvanus Cobb, and Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, many of whom were promoted by Robert Bonner, publisher of the *New York Ledger*. Bonner discovered that he could market a story based on name recognition alone, so would sign authors on exclusive contracts in exchange for generous salaries and even benefits. Some of the earliest dime novels, including the first, were written by celebrated authors. When contracts expired, competition to sign a famous author drove up costs for publishers. Eventually they realized that it would be better business if the author belonged to them. This trend began with “Old Sleuth,” a name used by creator Harlan Page Halsey for his famous detective hero of the same name in dime novels published by George Munro. When Norman Munro introduced a very similar character named “Youth Sleuth,” George sued his brother and won. Street & Smith eventually lured Halsey away, but when they tried to publish more Sleuth stories, George sued again and the court found that he had a “certain property right” in the use of the word “Sleuth” under trademark law, which did not go with its creator to a rival publisher. After this, dime novels were seldom attributed to real people, but to “house names,” which were owned by the publisher and could be shared by as many as a dozen writers.

Readers

Although the general perception is that dime novels were only read by children, they were actually popular with all readers, regardless of age, gender, race, or class. Reflecting this diversity, publishers would often refer to their audience by epithets such as “the Unknown Public” (coined by Charles Dickens to refer to readers of penny dreadfuls); “the Great People” (from Frederick Whittaker’s 1884 “Reply” in the *New York Tribune*); and “the Million” (used in advertisements for *Beadle’s Dime Novels* in the *New-York Daily Tribune*). The widespread popularity of the format has been attributed to a number of factors, such as rising literacy rates and better distribution via the railroads, but, more than anything else, it had to do with the



New York Weekly ... *Only a Bindery Girl*

fact that dime novels were cheap and there was not a lot of competition for a reader’s dime. By the 1870s, publishers began to target defined audiences as their marketing tactics evolved, with romance series like *Beadle’s Waverley Library*, aimed primarily at young women, and *Boy’s Library of Sport, Story and Adventure*, aimed at young men. Some of these efforts were more successful than others, and the general readership began to shift dramatically towards the end of the century. Publishers would focus most of their efforts on adolescent boys, with series about cowboys, detectives, inventors, and sports heroes making up the vast majority of what was published. Series for adults and girls still existed but were neither as popular nor as plentiful.

As with most forms of popular entertainment consumed by children, dime novels were often the subject of controversy and a target for reformers. The most notable enemy of the format was Anthony Comstock, a United States Postal Inspector and long-time secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. In his *Traps for the Young* (Funk & Wagnall, 1883), Comstock argues that dime novels and story papers lead to crime, because he believed adolescent readers would act out the behaviors they saw modeled in the stories they read. Famously, Comstock sent Frank Tousey to the Tombs for publishing a Eugene Sue novel (in print already for decades at that point), arrested numerous news dealers, and reportedly burned thousands of dime novels and story papers in his crusade. While this



New York Dime Library

campaign against the dime novel was short-lived and mostly unsuccessful, it did influence the public’s perception of the format. “Dime novel” became a pejorative term, one associated primarily with books for indiscriminate and often wayward children.

Despite the moral panic of the time, we are still interested in dime novels today because they were read by such a wide range of people. While they may be lacking in substance and style, dime novels often provide insight into what a diverse group of Americans were thinking and feeling at the end of the 19th century.

Preservation and Access

There is relatively little scholarship about the dime novel, at least when compared to other formats of popular literature that proliferated in their wake. As it stands now, researchers first need to have access to one of the few libraries with large dime novel collections, then need to know what they are looking for, usually by consulting one or more print bibliographies. Because no single library is likely to have everything researchers want, they will also likely need resources to travel or bid at auction. This creates a significant barrier to entry for any new research. My next *Caxtonian* article will examine how large-scale digitization efforts, such as those at Northern Illinois University, Villanova University, and Stanford University, have attempted to address these challenges.

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All Book Life Is There:

The *Caxtonian*, January 2004 to June 2019

A survey of all the issues of the *Caxtonian* that are available on the Club's website has been undertaken. These include all produced under the editorship of Robert McCamant, which began in September 2004 when he succeeded Robert Cotner and ended with the June 2019 issue. Detailed author & title and subject listings have been compiled as part of the project.

It is hoped that a similar survey of the paper copies of the issues published before 2004 from the first issue in 1993 (all edited by Robert Cotner) will be undertaken, resulting in a similar analysis of authors, titles, and subjects. Meanwhile, here are some of the features of the *Caxtonian* of the period covered that may be of interest.

- ❖ There have been 167 *Caxtonians Collect* ... thus far. The popular and continuing feature was begun by the late and much-lamented Paul Ruxin in the December 2004 issue when the subject was Gwin J. Kolb. Mr. Ruxin wrote six *Caxtonians Collect* in all, the last being on Susan Hanes in December 2006. Kathryn Tutkus wrote 16 interviews for the feature, the first being of Charles Miner in January 2005 and the latest of John Blew in February 2009. Others writing the feature include John Dunlevy (2), Wendy Husser (1), Lise McKean (4), and Peggy Sullivan (1). It is necessary to note that some have expressed doubt that Ms Sullivan's interviewee, Schmillian Schmaxton (August 2013), was a *bona fide* and paid-up member of the Caxton Club at the time.
- ❖ The undisputed champion of *Caxtonians Collect* is Robert McCamant himself. He has created 137 of those profiles so far, the first being of Jeffrey Jahns in December 2005 and the latest being of Robert Wedgeworth in June 2019. All that in addition to 24 reports, remembrances, short articles, and notes appearing under his name, together with his monthly compilations of book- and manuscript-related exhibitions and events.
- ❖ The only person to have appeared in *Caxtonians Collect* twice is Robert Karrow (August 2012 and March 2014).
- ❖ Apart from Mr. McCamant, the most prolific *Caxtonian* authors of the period are R. Eden Martin and David Meyer. Twenty of Martin's articles have graced the pages of the *Caxtonian* since 2004. The first was *Collecting Poe* in June of that year; and the latest *A Few More Writers and Books of World War I* in July 2014. The essays are notable not only for their number, readability, and detail but also for their length. One of his articles (on Longfellow) occupied 14 *Caxtonian* pages and it is estimated that his writings were on 178 of the pages published in the 11 years in which they appeared. No fewer than 24 engaging articles and other contributions since 2004 are by David Meyer. The first was *Temptations* in June 2005 and the latest *Booking the Coming Season, 1906*, in July 2017.
- ❖ Other authors with many contributions include Bruce Boyer (9 articles/other contributions), Robert Cotner (10, plus some *Musings*), Pierre Ferrand (8), Susan Hanes (11), Wendy Husser (13), Thomas Joyce (16), Jerry Meyer (12), Edward Quattrocchi (8), Paul Ruxin (12, plus his *Caxtonians Collect*), Junie Sinson (9), Peggy Sullivan (10), and Steve Tomashefsky (8).
- ❖ The only publication of poetry in the *Caxtonians* of the period was in April 2004, when three poems (*Quartet*, *Better than Nothing*, and *Unlocking the Doors of Perception for a Good Cleaning*) by Laurel Church appeared on page 3.
- ❖ Wynken De Worde (a name known to all *Caxtonians* if not one that appears in the roster of Club members) contributed 34 one- to two-page *Caxtonian Footnotes* (brief items of news about Club members and their activities). The first was in April 2006 and the latest in September 2015.
- ❖ Letters to the editor are rare. There are only four – from Florence Shay in May 2004 and April 2009; from Muriel Underwood in January 2008; and one in January 2008 that has been annotated as “possibly a tedious joke.”
- ❖ Letters and messages from the presidents of the Club were published in 2004 (Michael Thompson), 2005 and 2006 (Junie Sinson), 2009 (David Mann), 2011 (Bruce Boyer), 2014 (Susan Hanes), 2015 (Donald Chatham), and 2017 and 2018 (Arthur Frank).
- ❖ Books reviewed in the *Caxtonian* since 2004 include:
 - Jane Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House* (reviewed by Rebecca Sive in April 2017)
 - John Blew's *The Life and Works of Wright and Zoe Howes* (Steve Tomashefsky, January 2016)
 - Robert Cotner's *Pilgrimage* (Sherman Beverly, May 2009)
 - Benjamin Dreyer's *Dreyer's English* (Wendy Cowles Husser, June 2019)
 - Susan Hanes's *Wilkie Collins's American Tour* (William Baker, June 2008)
 - Jacky Harvey's *Red* (Wendy Husser, October 2018)
 - Marilyn Karp's *In Flagrante Collecto* (Robert McCamant, April 2013)
 - Jill Lepore's *The Secret History of Wonder Woman* (Wendy Husser, April 2017)
 - Reviel Netz and William Noel's *The Archimedes Codex* (Robert Karrow, November 2013)
 - Eric Newby's *Love and War in the Apennines* (Jim Tomes, December 2012)
 - Mary Norris's *Between You and Me* (Wendy Husser, November 2016)
 - Steven Pinker's *The Sense of Style* (Wendy Husser, January 2018)
 - Paul Saenger's *Space Between Words* (Dan Crawford, December 2004)
 - Ammon Shay's *Bad English* (Steve Tomashefsky, March 2015)
 - Peter Stanli's *Robert Frost* (Robert Cotner, September 2007).



- ❖ The subject analysis of the articles is not exhaustive, in that those subject headings do not include topics such as *bibliography*, *book collecting* and *book collections*, *book making*, *printing*, *publishing*, *book illustration*, etc. This is because the many ramifications of print on paper are the central concerns of the Club, thus almost every article would fall under or touch on one or more of those pervasive topics. However, the index does contain headings for a person or persons, an institution, a specific book or books, or a topic that falls outside the pervasive subjects listed above.
 - The list of persons covered begins with Henry Adams and ends with Emile Zola. The long list, heavily weighted toward writers, as one would expect, is of a diverse lot including Robert Frost, Samuel Johnson, James Joyce, General Custer, Leo Tolstoy, Harry Houdini, Alexander Pushkin, P.G. Wodehouse, J.K. Rowling, Cyrano de Bergerac, William Caxton, Aleister Crowley, Thomas Carlyle, Willkie Collins, Charles Dickens, Erasmus, Dante, and Emily Dickinson.
 - The institutions and collections that were the subject of *Caxtonian* pieces include the Vatican Library, the Freedom Museum, the De Grummond children's literature collection (University of Southern Mississippi), the Mid-Day Club, the Newberry and New York Public libraries, the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, the Ransom Center at the University of Texas, and the libraries of two institutions concerned with the law – Yale Law School and Stateville (Illinois) Prison.
 - Some of the specific subject headings – Bauhaus; the Brothers Grimm; Cinema; Chicago clubs; Cookbooks; the *Crockett Almanacs*; Don Juan; the *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot; the *Lakeside Classics* published by R.R. Donnelly; Letterhead

stationery; the Lewis & Clark Expedition; the Lincoln-Douglas debates; Literary prizes; Don Juan, Magic & magicians; the *National Geographic*; the Nonesuch, Olympia, and Peter Pauper Presses; the *Publishers' Trade List Annual*; R.R. Donnelly & Sons; the Ritter Book Company; World War I; and Zines.

- ❖ Given the nature and demographics of the Caxton Club, it is not surprising that there are many remembrances and celebrations of, stories about, and tributes to members who are no longer with us. Those memorialized include Greer Allen (2005), Mary Jane Anderson (2006), Paul Banks (2015), Abel Berland (2011), Rhoda Hertzberg Clark (2017), Lydia Cochrane (2016), Wanda Dole (2019), James Russell Donnelly (2019), Wilbert Hasbrouck (2016), Susan Jackson Keig (2018), Gwin Kolb (2006), Evelyn Lampe (2013), Eli Liebow (2013), Robert Mangler (2011), John McKinven (2007), Bill McKittrick (2011), Barbara Metz (2012), Charles Miner (2011), Ernest Mond (2013), Bill Mulliken (2014), Ron Offen (2010), Carolyn Quattrocchi (2007), Ned Rosenheim (2006), Bernard Rost (2012), Donn Sanford (2004), Karen Skrubish (2010), Dick Seidel (2013), Wilbert Seidel (2014), Florence Shay (2012), Charlie Shields (2004), Jane Smith (2010), Peter Stanlis (2012), Terry Tanner (2004), James Wells (2014), Rupert Wenzel (2006), and Bruce Young (2004).
- ❖ Many of the titles of the articles in the *Caxtonian* are straightforward and, as the British say, do what they say on the tin [can]. However, some are elliptical, verging on the enigmatic. Among those are: *Visionary Enchantment* (on the Lewis & Clark expedition; by Bruce Boyer, September 2010);



Nigh Famous (on the humorist Bill Nigh; by Dan Crawford, August 2005); *Another "Great Omar"* (on a special binding of the *Rubaiyat*; by Tom Joyce, January 2008); *It Was All All the Time* (on Ring Lardner; by Philip Liebson, February 2008); *Whose Boke is Thys?* (on a book signed by Dr. Johnson; by Paul Ruxin, August 2006); *Chess Pie* (on a Southern recipe; by Steve Tomashefsky, August 2013); and, *Too Many Men, Too Little Time* (on male writers; by Wendy Husser, September 2008) – an article that was also the source of this arresting line – “A woman can be sexually attracted to many men in her life; but she can only truly adore about 50.”

The motto of the now defunct Murdoch-owned British Sunday newspaper *The News of the World* was: “All human life is there” (it was true if you excluded the non-seamy parts of life). When considering the rich diversity of the *Caxtonians* of the last 15-plus years, the motto that comes to mind is “All book life is there.”

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Caxton Club Revels

Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Bob & Margaret McCamant

Mark your calendars for the Caxton Revels on December 18. Our annual holiday party will be held at the Newberry Library. Dinner will be in Ruggles Hall with the silent auction in Rettinger Hall. Members will be encouraged to sip libations and exchange stories as they bid on bibliophilic

bargains and treasures. Continuing last year's return to a prized Caxton tradition, we'll be entertained by Club member and professional magician, John Railing.

To make it easy to donate items for the silent auction, members of the auction committee will accept donations at the **November Friday luncheon (11/8)** and **Wednesday (11/20) dinner meetings**, and at the **December Friday luncheon meeting (12/13)**.

Please include with each item the donor's name and contact information as well as anything you might know about it, including where you obtained it and an idea of its value (for tax deduction purposes, the donor's estimate of value is the one that counts). Alternatively, simply fill out the auction forms that will be available at those meetings.

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Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Andrea Villasenor

(Note: sometimes an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call before visiting)

American Writers Museum, 180 N. Michigan Avenue, second floor, Chicago, 312-374-8790: **“Tools of the Trade.”** This exhibit examines the tools that have made writing possible through the years, including typewriters, inkwells, braille writers, and more. Featuring the actual writing implements used by renowned writers such as Sandra Cisneros, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ray Bradbury, and others; through June 30, 2020.

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: **“PHOTOGRAPHY + FOLK ART: Looking for America in the 1930s.”** At the heart of the display are works that represent two massive governmental projects to document everyday life in America: the Works Progress Administration’s (WPA) watercolors titled the “Index of American Design”; and the Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographs by Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, and others; through December 8.

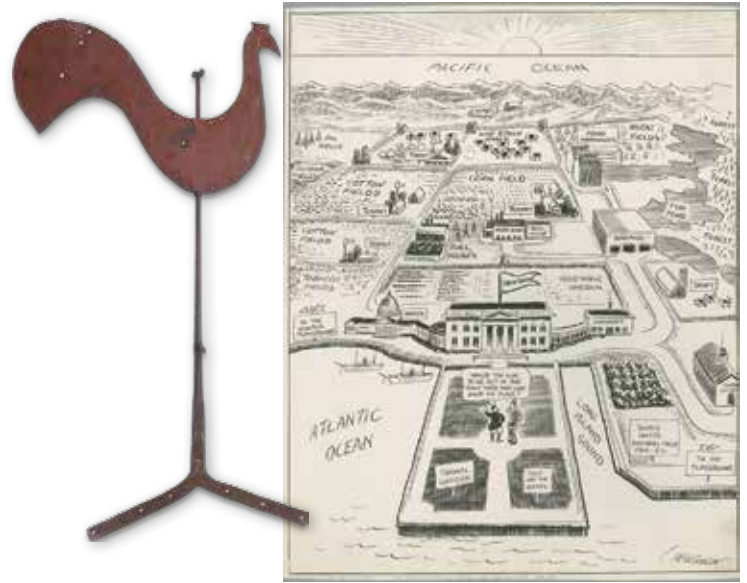
The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, 40 Arts Circle Drive, Evanston, 847-491-4000: **“Pop América, 1965-1975.”** This exhibition challenges and reframes familiar notions of Pop Art by bringing together artists from North, Central, and South America, as well as the United States and the Caribbean to explore how bold and colorful imagery, references to mass culture, and representations of everyday objects, signs, and symbols were embraced by artists working across the hemisphere; through December 8.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202: **“Bartram’s Garden in Words and Wood.”** Exhibition features original poetry and handcrafted artist boxes and objects made from the wood of fallen trees from Bartram’s Garden; through January 12, 2020.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: **“Modern By Design: Chicago Streamlines America.”** Featuring nearly 300 objects, photographs, and printed materials dating from the 1930s to 1950s, this exhibition celebrates Chicago’s role in shaping one of the most popular and enduring styles in our history; through March 1, 2020.

DePaul Art Museum at DePaul University, 935 W. Fullerton Avenue, Chicago, 773-325-7506: **“JULIA FISH: BOUND BY SPECTRUM.”** For three decades, Julia Fish has used her house and its vernacular architecture as the basis for a system of mapping color, form, and light in paintings and works on paper; through February 23, 2020. **“ARCHITECTURAL ANNOTATIONS.”** Curated by Julia Fish, a selection of works on paper by Daniel Burnham, Douglas Garofalo, and Giovanni Battista Piranesi. These works, drawn largely from DePaul Art Museum’s collection, incorporate overt or subtle forms of text and notes integral to the visual representation of architectural images and are inspiration for Fish’s own work; through February 23, 2020.

Intuit Museum of Outsider Art, 756 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, 312-243-9088: **“Justin Duerr: Surrender to Survival.”** Detailed pen and marker scrolls connected to create an elaborate story. These drawings incorporate poetry written by the artist and explore themes related to spirituality, the linear and cyclical nature of time, and include symbolic representatives of states of mind or non-mind



LEFT *Art Institute of Chicago / PHOTOGRAPHY + FOLK ART*
ARTIST UNKNOWN. PEACOCK WEATHERVANE, 1800/60. THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

RIGHT *The Newberry Library / What is the Midwest?*
JOHN T. McCUTCHEON. THE NEW YORKER'S IDEA OF THE UNITED STATES.
COURTESY THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY

with figures who evolve and appear throughout the works; through January 12, 2020.

Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-663-5554: **“Third Realm.”** Capturing nearly a decade of crucial artistic production in Asia (2007-2013), this exhibition presents works by artists who use photography, film, installation, and performance to investigate liminal spaces. The works disrupt the binaries of global and local, present and historical, spiritual and secular; through December 22.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: **“What is the Midwest?”** Often called “the Heartland” or “flyover country,” the Midwest tends to be characterized as a homogeneous, empty space between the American coasts. This exhibition challenges those assumptions and persistent narratives about the Midwest, exploring the confluence of peoples and environmental conditions that has defined the region and made it unique; through December 31.

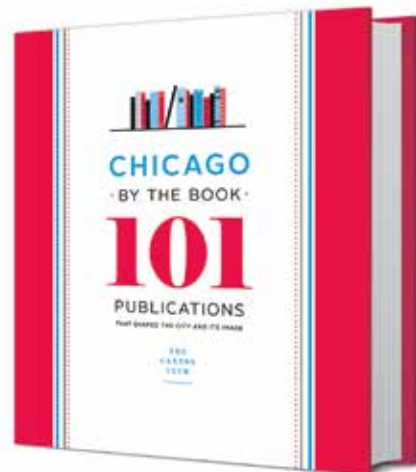
Poetry Foundation, 61 W. Superior Street, Chicago, 312-787-7070: **“The Life of Poetry in Morden Tower.”** Morden Tower, once a near-derelict medieval turret and now one of Britain’s literary landmarks, is an international poetry center with strong connections to the Objectivist, Beat, and Black Mountain poets and their United Kingdom allies. A showcase of posters from the 1960s and 1970s advertising the readings, photos, letters, and ephemera that tell a story of the graphic anarchy emblematic of the times; through January 2, 2020.

Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 312-374-9333: **“Silver Moon or Golden Star, Which Will You Buy of Me?”** Samson Young premieres a trilogy of animated music videos that explore the varying concepts of social progress and utopia. Loosely taking the idealism displayed at the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair as a point of departure, this multimedia exhibition asks how people adapt to societal changes that they have little control over. September; through December 29.

Send your listings to Andrea Villasenor (villasenora@newberry.org).

Books that Built Chicago

Chicago's Architectural Contributions



Join Chicago architecture aficionados Robert Bruegmann, Kim Coventry, John Ronan, and Pauline Saliga to discuss the significant architecture and urban design projects profiled in ***Chicago by the Book: 101 Publications that Shaped the City and Its Image***.

The speakers were contributors to *Chicago by the Book*, a recent publication from the Caxton Club:

Robert Bruegmann, historian, critic, and Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art History, Architecture and Urban Planning at University of Illinois at Chicago. He wrote the entry “Carl W. Condit, The Chicago School of Architecture, 1964.”

Kim Coventry, Founder and President of The Coventry Group, LLC. She wrote the entries “The Lakeside Classics, 1903–,” and “Four American Books Campaign: Dana, Melville, Poe, and Thoreau, 1930.”

John Ronan, architect and John and Jeanne Rowe Endowed Chair of Professor of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology College of Architecture. He wrote the entry “860–880 Lake Shore Drive, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe Architect, ca. 1951.”

Pauline Saliga, Executive Director of the Society of Architectural Historians. She wrote the entry “Harold M. Mayer and Richard C. Wade, Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, 1969.”

This program is cosponsored by the Caxton Club and the Chicago Collections Consortium.

Date

Wednesday, December 11, 2019
6:00 to 7:00 pm

Location

The Newberry Library
Ruggles Hall
60 West Walton Street, Chicago
Phone 773-235-2523

Cost and Registration

Free and open to the public; free tickets required. Tickets will be available on November 1, 2019 at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/books-that-built-chicago-tickets-69605569131>

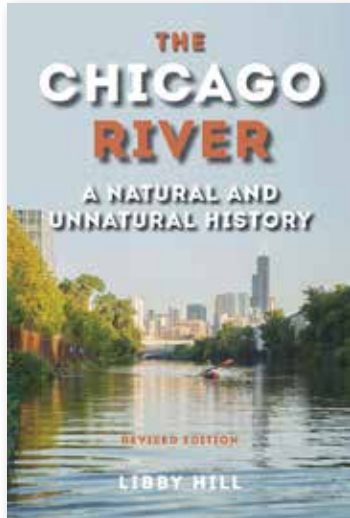
Doors open a half hour before the program begins, with first-come, first-served seating for registered attendees. Walk-ins without tickets will be admitted 10 minutes before the event begins, if space permits.

People with disabilities and other accessibility concerns may request to be seated first. To reserve an access-friendly space in the room, first register on November 1 then email publicprograms@newberry.org at least 48 hours before the event. Seats arranged in this way will be held until 10 minutes before the event starts.



Bookmarks...

Luncheon: Friday, November 8, Union League Club
Libby Hill on the Chicago River



You may go over it or under it or on it. Perhaps you have shuddered at the thought of going in it. You have seen it green in the early spring. You have surely seen it from above, in dramatic footage shot from drones. It is the Chicago River ... and this Caxton luncheon will help you see it in a whole new way.

Speaker Libby Hill will portray the river in a generously illustrated presentation that reveals its natural and unnatural history. She will explore its role in Chicago's development; the abuses it has endured; the

engineering that has reshaped its role; and the efforts to reclaim it. Be prepared to be surprised as we dip beneath the surface.

Hill is an environmentalist, educator, and author of *The Chicago River: A Natural and Unnatural History*. She is a much sought after speaker and an energetic preservation activist.

There will be books available to be purchased and signed.

Buffet opens at 11:30am; program 12:30-1:30pm. Luncheon is just \$35. The program is free but please let us know you are 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 November...

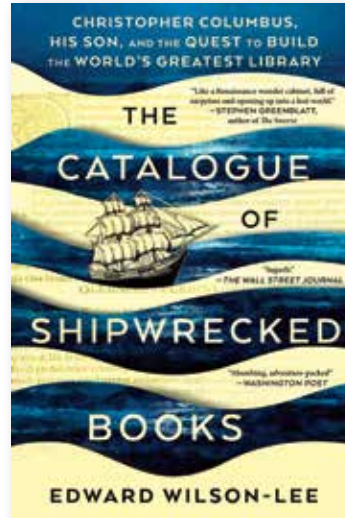
DECEMBER LUNCHEON

December 13, Union League Club: It laid claim to the title "Crime of the Century" as Chicago newspapers breathlessly covered the story. Nina Barrett, owner of Evanston's Bookends and Beginnings, will tell the tale as she draws from her book *The Leopold and Loeb Files: An Intimate Look at One of America's Most Infamous Crimes*.

JANUARY LUNCHEON

January 10, Union League Club: Caxtonian Jim Hagy on *Magicians at the Columbian Exposition*. Welcome doubters and be astonished! Learn first-hand of the magical wonders that baffled and delighted fairgoers, as magicians from around the world performed at the 1893 fair. You may go home with a special, limited edition book.

Dinner, November 20, Union League Club
Edward Wilson-Lee on *Christopher Columbus, His Son, and the Quest to Build the World's Greatest Library*



The Caxton Club, in partnership with the Union League Club's Leighton Library, will welcome Edward Wilson-Lee as he explores the world of Hernando Colón, younger son of the explorer Columbus, who set out to equal and surpass his father's achievement by building the greatest library the world had ever known. Colón was his father's companion on his final and fateful expedition, the chronicler of his father's life, a cartographer, lexicographer, courtier and botanist – but his true passion was for books,

which he collected on a vast scale. His life was a voyage into the new and rapidly expanding world of print and a race against time to rescue his father's memory before it was too late.

Wilson-Lee's *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books* will be on sale for signing during the cocktail hour and after the dinner for \$18. Books can be pre-ordered when making a reservation.

To celebrate Caxton Club's 17 years of grant giving for book arts, bibliography, zines, and print culture studies, the following Chicago book artists will be displaying their work during the cocktail reception starting at 5pm in the ULCC's Leighton Library:

Hannah Batsel | Ben Blount | Melissa Jay Craig | Jennifer Farrell
Ken Gerleve | Karen Hanmer | Craig Jobson | Audrey Niffenegger
Mardy Sears | Jamie Weaver | Don Widmer

The cocktail reception (5-6pm) and program (6pm) will be followed immediately by dinner. Beverages available for \$6-\$12. Three-course dinner: \$66. Reservations are required and must be received no later than NOON, Monday, November 18. Payment will be required for dinner reservations cancelled after that time and for no-shows. Reserve at caxtonclub.org, call 312-255-3710, or e-mail caxtonclub@newberry.org.

DECEMBER DINNER

December 18, our 82nd annual Revels, to be held at the Newberry Ruggles Hall. Silent auction, buffet dinner, and magic. Doors open at 5pm for social hour and to browse the treasures; dinner and the magic begin at 6pm. Buffet Dinner \$60 (a slight reduction in standard charges to allow extra monies for bidding). Drink tickets \$5 each. For details on instructions for dropping off items for the silent auction, see page 5 of this month's *Caxtonian*.

JANUARY DINNER

January 15, Union League Club: Author, artist, and Caxtonian Audrey Niffenegger.