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The Longfellows and Their Books

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his study at Craigle House, c. 1875; photo by George K. Warren

Ambrotype of Frances "Fanny" Elizabeth Appleton Longfellow

Daguerreotype of Fanny Longfellow reading to her children

Nicholas A. Basbanes

Reading together as intellectual equals and doing so often was central to the marriage of the celebrated nineteenth-century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) and his beloved wife of 18 years, Frances "Fanny" Elizabeth Appleton Longfellow (1817-1861).

"I particularly love Fanny's face by lamplight as she sits reading," Longfellow wrote in his journal on June 22, 1846, a few weeks before they would celebrate their third anniversary. The selection for that evening's meeting of the minds had been Casimir Delavigne's *Don Juan d'Autriche*: "which the author calls a comedy, but which we should call a melodrama," he offered in his commentary, and added a postscript: "I did not think Delavigne had so much blood in him." A week before that there was this: "A true summer morning, warm and breezy. Fanny sat under the linden tree and read me Heine's poems, while I lay on a hay-cock." A few days after that, they enjoyed "a charming sketch" – "Fire Worship" – written by Henry's good friend and Bowdoin College classmate, Nathaniel Hawthorne, which he deemed "very well done."

That Christmas, another close acquaintance, Ralph Waldo Emerson, sent Longfellow a copy of his poems, prompting an immediate response. "My wife read it to me last night. It gave us both the highest and keenest delight. A precious volume! The only bad thing about it is, that I shall never get my wife to read any more of my poems, you have fascinated her with yours!" A few weeks later, on a snowy Sunday afternoon in February, Henry took a break from his work on *Evangeline* to relax with Fanny and their mutual friend Charles Sumner, a regular weekend houseguest. "Tasted the sweet luxury of sitting all day by the fireside and hearing someone read," Henry recorded. "Sumner delivered to us from an arm-chair his lecture on 'Algerine Slavery,' which is exceedingly clever, simple, and striking."

Henry's private journal, kept faithfully by him for more than 50 years, is replete with pithy observations about the books he was

See THE LONGFELLOWS, page 2

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THE LONGFELLOWS, from page 1

reading, studying, teaching, or translating into English during the 25 years he worked as a professor of modern European languages, seven of them at Bowdoin, 18 at Harvard College. He continued the regimen after he and Fanny were married and had taken up residence in a magnificent Georgian mansion on Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The house was notable for having served as the official residence and command headquarters for George Washington during the Siege of Boston (1775-1776).

How Henry and Fanny became a couple is central to the narrative of my recent book, *Cross of Snow: A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Knopf). It is a compelling story that involves seven years of frustrated courtship and the ill-advised writing of *Hyperion*, a thinly-veiled fictional "romance," as he called it, in which a rejected suitor pines for what was then the "stately dark lady" of his dreams.

As recalled in *Hyperion*, the first impression that the Henry character, Paul Flemming, has of Mary Ashburton, his female counterpart, is of a woman he hears conversing in the dimly lit common room of a Swiss inn, her words "spoken in a voice so musical and full of soul" that they come to him as "a whisper from heaven." The woman leaves the room before Flemming can see her face, leading him to seek out her identity. He "would fain have sat and listened for hours to the sound of that unknown voice," he rhapsodizes. "He felt sure, in his secret heart, that the being from whom it came was beautiful."

Beautiful in Henry's eyes, to be sure, but also highly cultivated, sharp-witted, impressively artistic, multi-lingual, and formidably well-read, with an inexhaustible thirst for knowledge. In disclosing his new-found obsession for this remarkable woman, who was just 18 years old when they met, to one of his closest confidantes several months later, he described Fanny as a "glorious and beautiful being – young – and a woman *not* of talent but of *genius!*"

Longfellow's study; photo by Nicholas A. Basbanes

When the two first crossed paths in July 1836, Henry was still reeling from the loss eight months earlier in Holland of his 23-year-old first wife, Mary, following a miscarriage. He and Mary were six months into a rigorous European trip at the time, the goal being to master half-a-dozen languages and literatures to go along with the half-dozen others he had acquired in Europe a decade earlier. In both of those journeys, Henry bought books for himself and the colleges he represented. He picked up tips and nuances of the antiquarian trade early on in Madrid from the expatriate American bookseller, Obadiah Rich, that would stay with him forever.

A few months after Mary's death, Henry informed George Ticknor, the professor he would be replacing at Harvard, that three trunks of new acquisitions he had shipped to Boston from Rotterdam had been lost with the sinking of the brig *Hollander* "in sight of her port," the titles "rare and curious Dutch books; the harvest of a month's toil among the book-stalls of Amsterdam." Though the con-

signment was insured, he found the loss lamentable. "The books were really too good to be sunk; they were food for worms – not fishes. And so goes the entire collection of Dutch literature." Six years later, and deeply depressed with Fanny's steadfast rejection, he traveled to Germany for some restorative "water-cures" at a spa on the Rhine, but he still found time to go book hunting. "I know not how it is," he wrote home of some materials he had just sent shipped off to Boston, "but during a voyage I collect books as a ship does barnacles. These books are German, Flemish, and French."

Henry spent the winter and spring of 1835-36 studying at Heidelberg University, finding solace, he would write in *Hyperion*, by having "buried" himself in "books, old dusty books." Deciding, finally, that he needed a break, he set out on a summer excursion through the Rhineland that took him eventually to Switzerland and the serendipitous meeting at Interlaken with Fanny, then traveling through Europe with her family. Henry readily accepted an invitation from Nathan Appleton, her father, a Massachusetts textile manufacturer, to travel for a fortnight with his entourage, reading aloud with them during lengthy carriage rides from the ample supply of books they had brought along for just that purpose. There is nothing in either of their journals to indicate any kind of epiphany that might have fomented a lasting relationship; what both did record of their interactions, however, suggests an appreciation each had for the other's mind.

Fanny had been taught by eminent private tutors from early childhood and was fluent in several languages. She dazzled Henry with her on-the-spot translation of a German ballad into English – superior, even, he acknowledged, to his own. A voracious reader, she impressed him with her critical acumen, commenting boldly in one spirited exchange on the merits of Nathaniel Parker Willis, a writer from Maine they both knew personally. She allowed that while Willis displayed occasional "flashes" of talent, they were little more than "well-polished prettinesses" that were at best superficial and imitative. "If one could separate the man's personal character, so false, so flimsy, from his poetry," she continued, holding nothing back, "I might admire him much more – his best thoughts now seem but affectations, mimicries of other people's best garnished out his own way."

Shortly after taking up his new duties at Harvard, and after the Appletons had returned to Beacon Hill, Henry began calling on Fanny with the hope of gaining her affections. Soundly rebuffed – "for my love [she] gives me only friendship," he lamented – he wrote *Hyperion* with the utterly misplaced thought that it might improve his prospects. Seven years would pass before they became husband and wife, devoted to each other from the day they exchanged vows on July 13, 1843. "It is part of our theory of life," Henry would write to an admirer in Europe, "never to be separated."

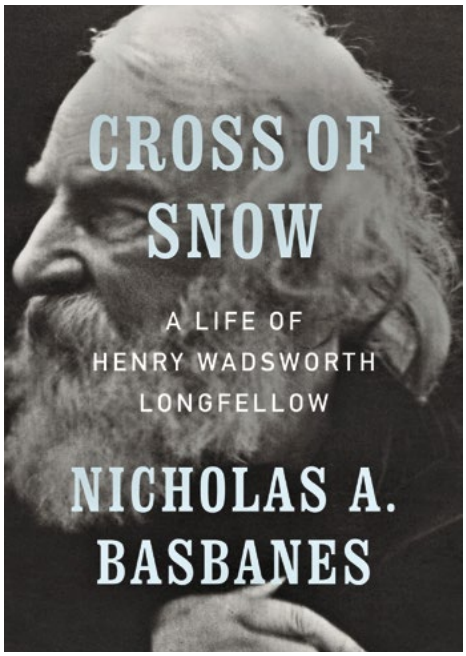
On a professional level, their rapprochement was similarly transformative, ushering in 18 prolific years of literary output that included the book-length narrative poems *Evangeline, a Tale of Acadie* (1847), *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), *The Courtship of Miles Standish* (1858), and numerous stand-alone classics such as "The Building of the Ship" (1849), "The Children's Hour" (1860), and "Paul Revere's Ride" (1861). Popular before their marriage, Henry's celebrity quickly reached new heights as his fame spread worldwide.

He wasted no time putting Fanny to work on his literary projects, most productively, in her words, as a "pretty active spur upon his Pegasus." Her journal documenting their first year of marriage describes a frenetic pace that included his writing of a "peace poem" that she, a lifelong pacifist, had urged he take on after a visit to the armory in Springfield, Massachusetts, during their honeymoon. For a central image, she proposed that he use the thousands of long-barreled muskets racked there in rising stacks to suggest organ pipes "for the fearful musician Death to play upon." The result was "The Arsenal at Springfield," a nine-stanza poem that became a rallying cry for the antiwar movement propounded most vigorously in the North by Charles Sumner, who would in time became the most vigorous champion of abolition in the United States Senate.

Fanny worked closely at this time too with Henry on a two-volume anthology – *The Poets and Poetry of Europe* (1844) – that would be the first of its kind in the nation, some 900 pages containing material selected from 10 European literary traditions that he translated

See THE LONGFELLOWS, page 4

Longfellow's Craigie Library; photo by Nicholas A. Basbanes



THE LONGFELLOWS, from page 3

into English; the original manuscript in the Houghton Library shows numerous textual notations in her hand. She also contributed some commentary: "Wrote a little in Swedish preface," she noted one morning; another entry proudly described the mammoth effort as "*our* book."

There was a satisfying rhythm in their routine. A day spent on Icelandic literature was balanced with a reading of *Les mystères de Paris*, a serial novel by the French writer Eugène Sue that had appeared in 90 parts in "Journal des débats" over the previous 18 months. Fanny confessed being "sickened at heart with its horrors," shocked that "such hells of infamy exist in the souls God has made." They were meanwhile making steady progress with *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, the newly released best-seller written by Fanny's former Beacon Hill neighbor, the historian William Hickling Prescott. A day of editing page proofs was followed by Fanny reading aloud a commentary in the *North American Review* on Rufus Griswold's *The Poets and Poetry of America* by the up-and-coming Boston essayist Edwin P. Whipple, which she judged to be "brilliant and a remarkable production" for a young man of just 22 – "but too many youthful arabesques if one must be critical."

Fanny also was amanuensis for many of Henry's letters – he suffered from severe eye strain at this time, brought on, he thought, from too much reading at night by lamplight – and listened carefully to the lectures he prepared for his Harvard students, complaining at one point that she could not attend any in person because women were not allowed in the classrooms. "I have proposed, à la Portia," she told her sister-in-law, making reference to a famous scene in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*: "disguising myself in male attire to hear them, but have now resigned myself to getting a rehearsal only."

Of the 812 letters Fanny wrote known to survive, 225 were written to her closest friend from childhood, Emmeline Austin Wadsworth, and they are indispensable for any understanding of her opinions and convictions, not least among them her thoughts on books. Of note in this context is a perspicacious comment she offered in 1849 on a new novel by an English author going by the name of Currer Bell, whose first book, *Jane Eyre*, had captivated her the previous year. The pseudonymous author was not yet identified as Charlotte Brontë, and the gender still presumed by most to be male, but Fanny was having none of it. "There is so much two women have to say to each other," she confided to her dearest female confidante, then living in Geneseo, New York. "I have felt this more keenly reading *Shirley*. It is admirable, – nature itself, and the style wonderfully vigorous and natural." There could, she then asserted, "no longer be any doubt" in her mind – and she was way out ahead of everyone else with her hunch – "but a woman's genius sounds those depths. How I wish I could read it with you."

Fanny stopped keeping a regular journal with the birth of her first child in 1844, though the readings with Henry continued unabated throughout their marriage, and were recorded dutifully by Henry in his journal, and Fanny in her correspondence. Her death in July 1861 from a horrible domestic accident left him bereft, and for a period unable to resume the writing of original poetry. It was at this time that he returned to a translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* he had begun years earlier. He became the first American to do a complete rendering of the epic poem into English.

Their residence, known now as Longfellow House – Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, owned by the National Park Service – is distinctive for retaining its original contents, including the books. Henry never prepared a catalogue of his holdings, which today total 11,799 volumes. Writings in 15 languages and dozens of dialects are represented, each of which Henry read, and in most cases spoke, with fluency. Of its character, it can be said the contents are cosmopolitan to the extreme. While there is no formal catalogue, there is a decided sensibility to the arrangement that proceeds associatively from bookcase to bookcase and from room to room – there is nothing haphazard or willy-nilly about the organization.

Of the sonnets Henry turned to writing with consummate skill toward the end of his life, one, written in 1881, the year before he died, was dedicated to his "most intimate friends," and titled, simply, "My Books." It closes with these lines:

So I behold these books upon their shelf,
My ornaments and arms of other days;
Not wholly useless, though no longer used,
For they remind me of my other self,
Younger and stronger, and the pleasant ways
In which I walked, now clouded and confused.

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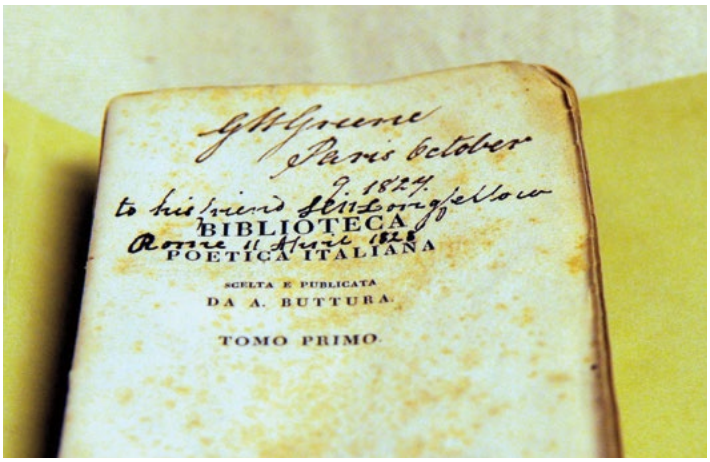
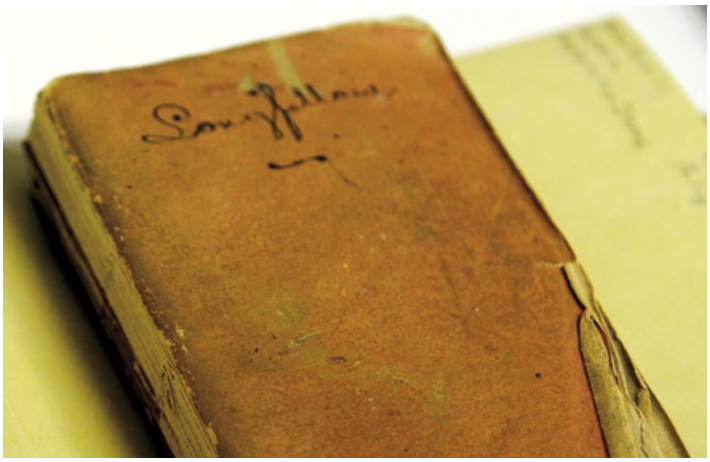


Dante inscribed by Greene



Dante gift from G.W. Greene with Longfellow signature

Eminent Caxtonians, Three: There's No Business...

Dan Crawford

There may be a few members of the Caxton Club who remember way back in the days of network television and how NBC covered New Year's Eve. There was a countdown in Times Square, waiting for the ball to drop, and then a quick cut to Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians performing *Auld Lang Syne*.

Until 1976, the voice in Times Square was that of Ben Grauer, a child actor in silent movie days who worked his way through radio and television, as game show host, roving reporter, and voiceover where needed. He is remembered among classical music collectors as the voice on the legendary Toscanini radio concerts.

So what was he doing in the Caxton Club?

Harry B. Smith

Well, Grauer (member 1956-1962), like many show business personalities, led a secret life. The proprietor of the Between-Hours Press, he printed, among other things, an annual birthday card for book designer Bruce Rogers (generally with illustrations by New York businessman and printmaker John de Pol). There were also two books of his own – one on Noah Webster and another on his research into a manuscript of Bernal Diaz del Castillo's landmark work on how he went to Guatemala with Hernando Cortez and was lucky to get a T-shirt (not the exact title of the book). He spent many years researching a history of pricing antiquarian books, corresponding with book dealers all over the country. Many of his papers are in the collection of Columbia University, though the Grolier Club (to which he also belonged) has a large portion.

In spite of the ability of some Caxton speakers to keep the audience awake, theatricality is not an attribute associated with book collecting. Yet, many show biz personalities were known to be bookish. The Jerome Kern collection was legendary, and Marilyn Monroe's book collection provoked some headlines when it came up for sale. Neither Jerome nor Marilyn managed to join the Caxton Club, but we have boasted such members as Jay Marshall, comedian, magician, ventriloquist (legendary in all three fields); Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, playwright; and, for that matter, William Owen Goodman, who when his son Kenneth Sawyer Goodman died in the pandemic of 1919, decided to start a theater in his name.

Ben Grauer

The phenomenon goes right back to the beginning of the club, however. Francis Wilson (member 1895-1903) was apparently a pal of Eugene Field's. When he was in Chicago he used to drop by McClurg's Bookstore with Field to talk books in the Saints and Sinners Corner. When that group decided to become a club for book discussions (possibly suggested by Field, perhaps urged by A.C. McClurg), Wilson joined when he was in town. Wilson also wrote books, though these tended to be about people he knew – Chicago superstar Joe Jefferson, Field, and John Wilkes Booth, whom he did not know personally but whom he heard about from his friend (and John's brother) Edwin Booth. His main claim to fame, however, was in stage comedy, where he appeared for many years, appearing in the first American cast of *HMS Pinafore* as Sir Joseph Porter, K.C.B., ruler of the Queen's Navy. In his spare time he directed, produced, and wrote plays and helped to found Actors Equity, of which he was the first president. (That makes him the first labor organizer found so far among the Caxton membership, though, of course, his work with Equity came years after he had left the club.)

Francis Wilson

Book collector Harry B. Smith (member 1895-96) wrote at least two books about his collection and the joys of collecting. That was in his spare time. When he was not buying books, he was busy writing 600 Broadway musicals. Anyone can *write* a musical, of course, but half the plays he wrote were actually produced, with music by such notables as Victor Herbert, Reginald De Koven, and Irving Berlin. Part of the process included production of lyrics for over 6,000 songs. The first book of Broadway show tune lyrics published in America was all his work, and he turned out hits from the 1890s – *Gypsy Sweetheart* – until the 1920s – *Sheik of Araby*. If you should happen to hear Fats Waller, Spike Jones, or George Harrison singing *Sheik of Araby*, reflect as you consider the lyric "At night while you're asleep, into your tent I'll creep," that a Caxtonian was responsible.

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Ralph Fletcher Seymour

Artist, Book Publisher, Teacher, Etcher, Active Club Participant
An Early Twentieth-Century Chicago "Renaissance Man"

Jim Rosenthal

"Renaissance Man" is defined as someone who is knowledgeable, educated, and proficient in a wide array of fields. Leonardo da Vinci is the exemplar. The best example in Chicago in the first half of the twentieth century was Ralph Fletcher Seymour. He was a man of many talents – an accomplished publisher of fine books, the creator of many book plates, and an excellent etcher who was also a man with a gift for teaching and for friendship. He traveled widely in Europe and the southwestern United States. He was an active member of many organizations including Cliff Dwellers, Caxton Club, Chicago Society of Etchers, Lake Zurich Golf Club, and many more. His list of friends included Clarence Darrow, Frank Lloyd Wright, Daniel Burnham, Bertha Jaques, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, Elbert Hubbard, Lorado Taft, and Jane Addams. There were few in the art, business, or social world in Chicago in the early 1900s who did not know Ralph Fletcher Seymour and appreciate both his talents and friendship.

Seymour was born on March 18, 1876, in Milan, Indiana (though biographical sources say – in my view, mistakenly – Milan, Illinois) and spent most of his childhood in that state. Seymour tells in his autobiography – *Some Went This Way* (1945)– that he was an undistinguished student in high school. In fact, his mathematics teacher made a point of telling him that he was "… no good in grammar or in Latin, and you certainly are dumb in mathematics," but added: "I think someday you will be a good artist."

Seymour studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy, then moved to Chicago in the autumn of 1898. His first job was drawing and lettering newspapers and advertisements in an engraving house. He worked in a "bull pen" with 20 other workers. Since the country was still recovering from a depression, his pay was zero, but, after two months, he received his first weekly pay – two dollars. Fortunately, the engraving house was an "incubator" for young artists. Joseph Leyendecker was a co-worker – he and his brother Frank were outstanding artists. Their work on advertisements and book illustrations was immediately noticed and was soon in high demand. Other contemporaries of Seymour in Chicago during this time were Jules Guerin, Harrison Fisher, Maxfield Parrish, and Childe Hassam.

Seymour soon moved on to bigger things. While at the Art Academy in Cincinnati, he developed a fondness for fine books. He hand-lettered a version of a chapbook, *Three Merry Old Tales* (possibly source material for Shakespeare) in his spare time and used his savings to print a full first edition in 1898 with the anticipation of easy sales. Those sales did not materialize, but good fortune struck when one of Seymour's friends gave a copy of the book to Frank W. Gunsaulus, the president of a college, friend of many mighty men in business, and a great book lover, known in the retail book trade in Chicago as "The Saint." Gunsaulus loved *Three Merry Old Tales* and offered to send his card with Seymour's promotional material on the book. Book sales rolled in. The edition soon sold out. The same thing happened with Seymour's next book – *Sonnets from the Portuguese* by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, of which he produced 510 copies. With the profits from these books Ralph Fletcher Seymour was in the book publishing business, in which he stayed for over 60 years. (For a more detailed description of Seymour's book publishing business, see Jerry Meyer's article in the *Caxtonian* of May 2011.)

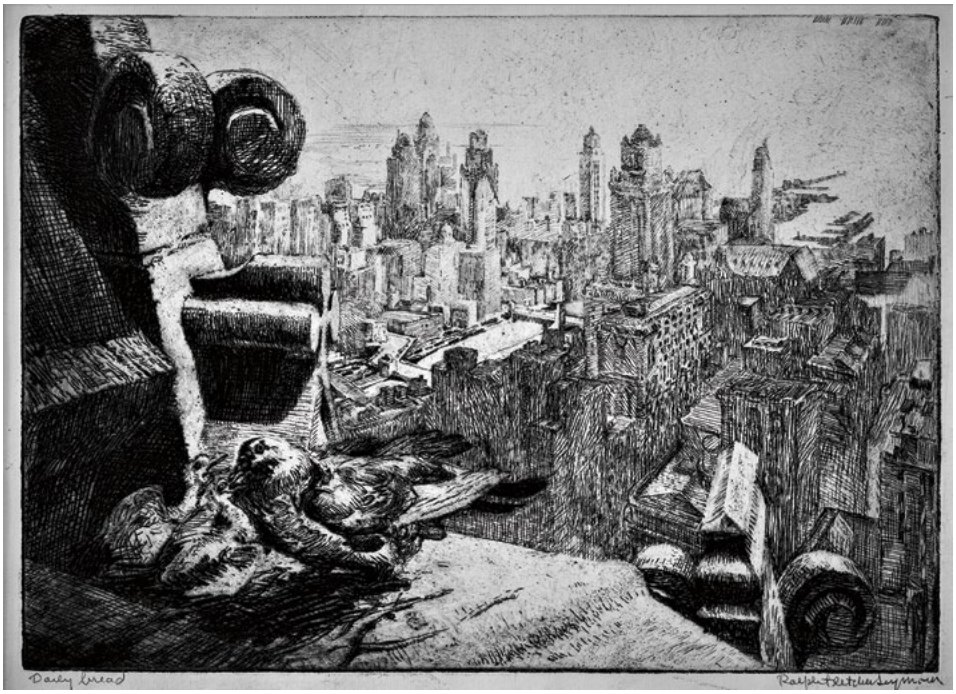
At that time, it became obvious to him and to his employer that he needed to find another place from which to run his burgeoning publishing business. He decided that the Fine Arts Building on Michigan Avenue was the place he needed to be. The building was filled with creative people of all kinds – musicians, architects, painters, sculptors, and others. He struck up a conversation with Charles Francis Browne, a noted landscape artist and publisher of a Chicago art magazine. Browne was leaving for his summer home and he offered the free use of his space in the Fine Arts Building. Seymour moved in. The offices were sublet from Lorado Taft – one of the leading sculptors of the time. Seymour convinced Taft that he would be a good tenant, neighbor, and friend. His publishing house had a permanent home. It was a perfect fit for his personality, and he thrived there in the center of the art, business, and cultural world of Chicago.

A Paris Wine Shop

The tenth floor of the Fine Arts Building was an active place. Lorado Taft was his neighbor and the offices of Frank Lloyd Wright were nearby. The world-renowned architect was a collector of Japanese prints. Seymour and Wright became friends and Seymour published a book on Wright's prints. Seymour was involved in many civic, cultural, and fraternal organizations. His autobiography is filled with stories of the Cliff Dwellers, the Caxton Club, Ravinia, the publishing industry, and his many friends from all walks of life. He was entertaining, talented, interesting and interested, and a protagonist in and teller of great stories.

As well as running his publishing business, Ralph Fletcher Seymour taught classes in lettering and graphic design at the Art Institute of Chicago. At that time, the Art Institute sponsored one teacher per year to study in France. Seymour was chosen for this honor in 1912. The experience had a major impact on his life, and his account of his many European adventures occupies about 40 pages of his 300-page autobiography.

One of Seymour's goals during his Parisian adventure was to learn how to be an etcher. Luckily, two of his Chicago friends – Otto Schneider and William Auerbach-Levy – were in Paris and agreed to be his teachers. Even though he was already an accomplished artist, he had to start from scratch. He learned everything from how to ground a plate, to how to design and needle the work, to how to use acid to etch the results, to how to choose the right printer for his etchings. When he returned to Chicago, many of his etchings were printed by Henry Rosenthal (my grandfather) and his son Charles



Daily Bread

Rosenthal (my father). He became an accomplished and enthusiastic etcher and a member of the Chicago Society of Etchers, a group started in 1910 at a meeting of Bertha Jaques, Ralph Pearson, Otto Schneider, and Earl Reed in Ms. Jaques's home. They decided to create an organization for the promotion of etching and etchers. The Chicago Society of Etchers became one of the most important artistic societies of the early twentieth century and was successful for over 40 years. (The definitive book on the CSE is *Bertha E. Jaques and the Chicago Society of Etchers* by Joby Patterson, 2002.)

Seymour's letter to Bertha Jaques:

> The Chicago Society of Etchers –
> to Mrs. Bertha E. Jaques, Secretary
>
> Dear Madam – It has taken me over a year to find time to write this letter of application for membership in the Chicago Society of Etchers, although I have more interest in belonging to so important an organization as it has proved to be than in almost any other affiliation. With this letter I send, in your care, 5 proofs of plates which I have etched, and printed, also. I wish to be made a member, if the low quality of the work, which is, nevertheless, the best that I can offer, will permit you to accept me. After your decision will you kindly return the examples to me and inform me of the Society's action as to my application, and greatly oblige.
>
> Very truly yours, R. F. Seymour
> (*February 4, 1915*)

His application was accepted. It did not take long for Bertha Jaques to include him on the jury selecting etchings for the annual show of the CSE. In the early days, these shows were held at the Art Institute of Chicago and attracted top etchers from all over the world. Being included was a big plus for an etcher's career. Prints were also sold at the show – a major income generator for the participants. Seymour served as a jury member at least until 1927.

The CSE had two categories of member – artist and associate. Each year, associate members received a presentation print created by one of the artists. These prints were selected by the CSE Jury of Selection. An etching by Seymour entitled *A Paris Wine Shop*, printed by Morris Henry Hobbs, was selected as the 1935 Presentation Print. Seymour's use of light emphasizes the contrast between the figures, a young and attractive waitress bathed in sunlight visiting with an older and somewhat homely patron in the shadows. Surely the patron was certain in his own mind that he became wittier and more intelligent with each glass of wine. It is doubtful the waitress was impressed – except maybe with the gratuity.

Seymour was a prolific etcher – he created etchings as often as many artists do sketches. Charles Rosenthal describes delivering printed etchings to Seymour in the Fine Arts Building. While accepting the prints, Seymour was talking to a visitor and etching a 5" by 7" grounded plate. To Charles's astonishment, he finished the plate in a span of about 15 minutes. Just about any scene that he encountered in his daily life could be the subject of an etching. For example, one of his friends enjoyed feeding the pigeons on the windowsill of his office. After a visit, Seymour decided to memorialize the act and the view. The result was one of his most famous etchings – *Daily Bread*.

Although Seymour worked in the city of Chicago for his entire career, he decided to live in the "country." He was one of the first non-farmers to buy land in an unincorporated area by the name of Ravinia (now Highland Park and the home of the famous Ravinia summer music festival). Seymour's house was just a few blocks from Lake Michigan. He and his family loved to take walks. His etching *Lake Michigan Surf* was undoubtedly of the view of the lake near where he lived.

As were many Chicagoans of his era, Seymour was fascinated by the Native Americans of the Southwest. He made numerous visits to New Mexico and to the Mayan and Inca ruins further south. As mentioned, one of his clubs and a source of much of his entertainment was the Cliff Dwellers. Despite the fact that almost none of the members had ever been west or had ever seen a Native American, the name sounded rather exotic, and since the meeting rooms were well above street level, the name stuck. Seymour's account of the first real visit of Pueblo Indians to the Cliff Dwellers' meeting rooms is a marvelous story. Suffice it to say that the 20-plus Pueblo Indians in attendance had great appetites and they could dance. Cliff Dweller members wound up standing on tables to give them room.

Seymour continued publishing books and producing etchings well into his 80s. He also continued to enjoy his clubs and the company of his many friends. On the last day of 1965, the Blackberry Inn in unincorporated Kane County, about 10 miles west of Batavia, Illinois, was the site of a New Year's Eve party that Seymour attended. After the New Year celebrations, he decided he would like to walk back to his log cabin along a road with no sidewalks. On the way, he was struck by a car and killed instantly. He was 89.

(*A version of this essay appeared in the blog* In Praise of Prints *in April 2020.*)

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Caxtonians' Collections: An Online Exhibition

Call for Submissions

The Caxton Club plans to create an online exhibition featuring highlights of its members' collections to celebrate the club's 125th anniversary. All members are encouraged to submit details of one of the jewels in their collecting crown – an item that is their favorite for whatever reason: rarity, personal association, connection with its creator (signatures, etc.), typographical or other beauty, and so on. Each item will be pictured alongside a bibliographic description and a short text on the item written by the collector. The club's leadership hopes that a large number of members will participate, and thus provide us with a virtual meeting place for book lovers and a clear demonstration of the range and depth of the Caxton Club to outsiders.

The exhibition will appear on the Caxton Club website. It will be available to any website user, but members submitting entries can choose to remain anonymous except to other club members.

Please review the guidelines at caxtonclub.omeka.net and see a sample entry at caxtonclub.omeka.net/items/show/3.

Make your submission by May 31, 2021 at the latest at caxtonclub.omeka.net/contribution.

Questions? Please contact the Digital Exhibition Committee at willhansen2@gmail.com.

Graphic for new online exhibition

Personal Treasures

Michael Gorman

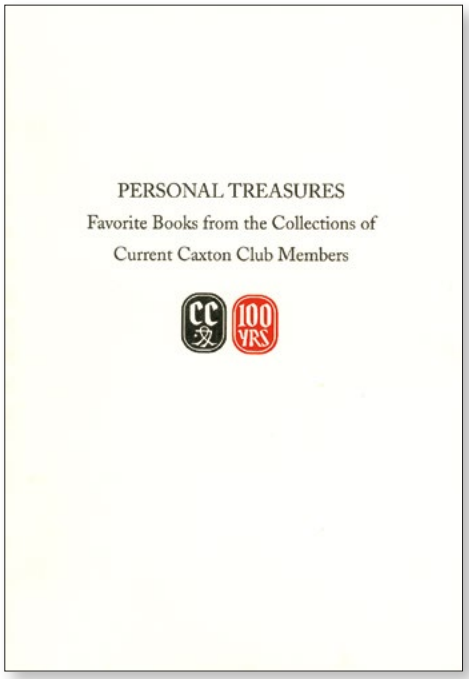
As you can see, two decades into the twenty-first century, the Caxton Club is planning an online continuing exhibition of bibliographic treasures owned by its members. Now that we are at the beginning of this development, let us look back to a little over a quarter of a century ago.

From January 30th to April 23rd, 1995, the Newberry Library housed an exhibition called *Personal Treasures: Favorite Books from the Collections of Current Caxton Club Members*. It was part of the commemoration of the club's centennial. (I assume it was no coincidence that the exhibition closed on the 431st anniversary of Shakespeare's birth and the 379th anniversary of his death.) Some members may still have the handsome 32-page catalogue (made possible by funding from Rand McNally) with its introduction by Paul Gehl, checklist of the items in the exhibition, and photographs of a few of the treasures. The exhibition was organized, and the checklist is arranged, in six categories:

– Chicago and the Midwest
– Medieval manuscripts and early printing
– Bindings, ancient and modern
– Press books
– Heroes and their books
– A miscellany of marvels

The 49 items included, of course, printed books notable for their rarity, printers (including two Caxton incunables), bindings, and/or associations, but also a mid-nineteenth century newspaper run, a letter, autographs, two leaves from an illuminated Bible, and manuscripts. It would be invidious to select a few items that are of inherently more interest than others – each of the 49 was special and valuable. However, the range of club members' interests, then as now, is illustrated by the exhibition including a copy of the explorer Ernest Shackleton's *Aurora Australis* bound in plywood from packing cases used in the 1907-8 British Antarctic Expedition (from the collection of Gerald F. Fitzgerald); the January 1844-January 1845 issues of *The Times and Seasons*, a bi-weekly Mormon newspaper published in Nauvoo, Illinois (Frank J. Piehl); the manuscript of a speech delivered by Arthur Conan Doyle to medical students in London in 1913 (C. Frederick Kittle); and a copy of the first, limited edition of Robert Frost's *In the Clearing* signed by the author (Robert A. Cotner).

In his introduction, "Chicago Collecting," Paul Gehl wrote, "As we view the splendidly miscellaneous results of our call to collectors of the club and read their various statements, we cannot help but get a better understanding of the urge to collect." In the same paragraph he refers to "the fellowship of collecting." As we look back at the 1995 exhibition and forward to our twenty-first-century cyber version, let us hope that the fellowship flourishes and we gain even more understanding of the urge, nay, the compulsion to collect.


PERSONAL TREASURES
Favorite Books from the Collections of
Current Caxton Club Members

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Union League Club's Outstanding Book on the History of Chicago Award, 2021

Cheryl Ziegler

The Union League Club of Chicago (ULCC) is one of the oldest continuously operating private clubs in Chicago. As such it has always emphasized a commitment to community and country, supporting Chicago's civic pride, and celebrating civic and patriotic values. The ULCC has played a pivotal role in key episodes of Chicago history including the World's Columbian Exhibition in 1893, the founding of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Crime Commission, and the construction of the Harold Washington Library.

The ULCC, as does the Caxton Club, has many traditions. One of the most enduring is the involvement in events that shaped Chicago history. The ULCC's "Outstanding Book on the History of Chicago Award" fills a gap in Chicago's literary and cultural life, and recognizes major contributions to our understanding of the city's rich history. In organizing the award and hosting the award reception on Thursday, March 4, 2021, the anniversary of Chicago's incorporation, the ULCC will bring attention to the research and scholarship of many distinguished historians and to Chicago's complex and dynamic history. This initiative will bring premier local cultural and educational institutions together to celebrate Chicago and our continuing engagement with the city's evolving history.

In this, the inaugural year of the award, there were 10 nominations – books published by the University of Chicago Press, the University of Illinois Press, Harvard University Press, Northwestern University Press, Northern Illinois University Press, the University of North Carolina Press, and Grove Atlantic Press. A panel comprised of five distinguished historians from Chicago universities, the Newberry Library, and the Chicago History Museum will review the nominated books and name the first recipient of the award.

Nominated Books, 2021

Balto, Simon. *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

Hayner, Don. *Binga: The Rise and Fall of Chicago's First Black Banker*. Northwestern University Press, 2019.

Kanter, Deborah. *Chicago Catolico: Making Catholic Parishes Mexican*. University of Illinois Press, 2020.

Keating, Ann Durkin. *The World of Juliette Kinzie: Chicago before the Fire*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Kraus, Joe. *The Kosher Capones: A History of Chicago's Jewish Gangsters*. Northern Illinois University Press, 2019.

Pacyga, Dominic A. *American Warsaw: The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Polish Chicago*. University of Chicago Press, 2019.

Remus, Emily. *A Shoppers' Paradise: How the Ladies of Chicago Claimed Power and Pleasure in the New Downtown*. Harvard University Press, 2019.

Sites, William. *Sun Ra's Chicago: Afrofuturism and the City*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Smith, Carl. *Chicago's Great Fire: The Destruction and Resurrection of an Iconic American City*. Grove Atlantic, 2020.

Weems, Robert. *The Merchant Prince of Black Chicago: Anthony Overton and the Building of a Financial Empire*. University of Illinois Press, 2020.

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Remembering Morrell Shoemaker

Paul F. Gehl

Morrell Shoemaker, a Caxtonian since 1994, died on September 22 last year. He was a quiet man, but one who got things done. I have a clear memory of hearing about him before I met him. Evelyn Lampe, a Caxtonian who helped to found the Newberry Library Book Fair, told me in 1986 that she had a wonderful architect volunteer who planned layouts for the sales room. Evelyn introduced me to him soon after, but it was another 20 years before Morrell and I found out what we most had in common, that both our fathers were small-town undertakers who ran furniture stores on the side. (In those days, caskets were furniture too.) Morrell was a stalwart of the book fair for years. Eventually he said he wanted to stay involved at the Newberry, but less strenuously. That was about the time he joined the Caxton Club, nominated by Evelyn, and seconded by Karen Skubish.

Morrell collected books and maps on urban history and city planning. An excellent account of his bibliophilia can be found in a "Caxtonians Collect…" interview with John Dunlevy in the August 2006 *Caxtonian* (available on the club's website). I recommend it for vivid tales of book-hunting in 1950s Chicago. John told me that Morrell mentioned a factual error to him but insisted it was so trivial he would not say exactly what it was – showing his characteristic modesty. Morrell never introduced his special interests into a conversation unless someone asked a question for which his experience was pertinent. Then he would offer a fact or a well-considered opinion and let others carry the conversation forward. He was a good listener, not a great talker. We will miss his gentle, good company and welcome comments on many subjects – books and music most of all, not only at Caxton meetings. He was a regular at the Cliff Dwellers (member since 1961) and Cornell Club. He showed up for more Newberry Library events than almost anyone, and was often encountered at the Art Institute, at Orchestra Hall, or just out walking in the city.

Morrell McKenzie Shoemaker, Jr. was born in 1923 in Granville, Ohio where his parents attended Denison College. Morrell also studied at Denison and earned an architecture degree at Cornell in 1945. He came to Chicago the following year and promptly joined Fourth Presbyterian Church (his parents had married there in 1916). He served the church in several capacities for decades, including the design of an education wing called Westminster House. It was completed in 1959 (when Morrell was only 36). The building was a favorite accomplishment but, as Associate Pastor Morgan Simons remembers, Morrell graciously accepted the fact that it had to be demolished in 2011 to make room for a much larger facility.

Morrell Shoemaker and Susan Jackson Keig at a Caxton Club event; photo by Bob McCamant

Morrell's first Chicago job was with Jensen & McClurg, successor firm to that of William LeBaron Jenney. When Rob Carlson and I moved into an 1893 Jenney skyscraper, Morrell told us with a chuckle that he had managed the building in the late '40s. I ever after wondered if that chuckle had something to do with the problematic plumbing. In 1953 he became a partner in the firm of McClurg, Shoemaker & McClurg, later just McClurg & Shoemaker. His commissions included other church buildings (his Englewood Methodist Church of 1965 with its hexagonal sanctuary still stands), office buildings, and warehouses. For a number of years his firm edited *Walker's Building Estimating Reference Book*, a 1200-page manual widely used by architects and engineers. Chicagoana collectors should look for a 1969 booklet by him, *Five Walks In and Around Chicago's Famous Buildings*. It is authoritative, not least because Morrell never owned a car and walked everywhere in town in every season and every weather for 70 years and more.

By all accounts, Morrell took pride in his professional work and enjoyed his clients, but Dan Crawford remembers his mordant verdict on the everyday life of an architect: "You live with a project.... A client might call you up with an idea or a question at 2 a.m.... There are site visits, office visits, phone calls going on for three or four years. You are in and out of the building from groundbreaking to ribbon cutting. At the grand opening, you drink champagne with your client, and they may unveil a plaque with your name on it. And the next time you go in, there's a security guard demanding to know what your business is on the premises."

Most Caxtonians only knew Morrell in retirement, a nattily dressed bachelor with old-school manners, a dependably charming companion. All that walking kept him in shape, and his stride had a characteristic bounce. About 2017 he added a cane to his wardrobe, but the jaunty gait remained the same, recognizable at 50 yards distance. In 2008, he was among 16 Newberry Library donors who traveled to visit libraries and book artists in Belgium and the Netherlands. Although Morrell was already 84 at the time, he would pointedly never take a seat until all others were accommodated. On an earlier trip, he and I were the only men in the group who opted for tickets to hear Catherine Malfitano sing at La Scala. Morrell would gladly have walked to the opera house, but in order for the others to have the experience of Milan's vintage trams, he seconded my suggestion that the group travel that way. The car was predictably full of elegantly dressed operagoers. Just as predictably, Morrell grabbed a strap and refused to sit down.

Morrell was an unforgettable friend and clubman, a highly polished Chicago gem. His nieces and nephew have invited memorial donations to Fourth Pres or to the Newberry. A gift to the Caxton Club would also be a fitting memorial.

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Book- and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

(Note: A listing of virtual/online exhibitions that you can visit from the comfort and safety of your home.)

Virtual Eileen Gray Exhibition, Bard Graduate Center

Bard Graduate Center, New York

bgc.bard.edu/gallery/exhibitions/107/virtual-eileen-gray-exhibition

Virtual Eileen Gray Exhibition. Born in Ireland in 1878, Eileen Gray was one of the twentieth century's most accomplished designer-architects whose artistic practice also included painting and photography. Today she is recognized as a pioneering woman in what was the predominantly male field of modern architecture who, with contemporaries like Le Corbusier, shaped how and where we live. This online companion to **Bard Graduate Center Gallery's Eileen Gray exhibition** invites the viewer to click the featured images to explore many different aspects of Gray's career, from her celebrated projects to many lesser-known and recently rediscovered pieces on display for the first time.

Bodleian Library, Oxford

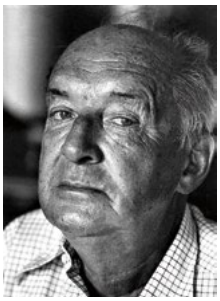
bodleian.ox.ac.uk/whatson/whats-on/online/vernon

The Vernon Manuscript: A Literary Hoard from Medieval England. One of the Bodleian's greatest treasures and one of the most important books in English to survive from the medieval period. The manuscript was made around the end of the fourteenth century, perhaps 1390-1400. It contains 370 texts that are two and a half times as long as Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. The texts are on moral or religious subjects that conform with the teachings of the medieval Church and includes a wealth of decoration by a large number of artists. The manuscript is almost all in English. The dialect is that of the English West Midlands, but some of the texts still carry traces of the dialects of other regions of England. This reveals that the makers of the book gathered up texts from far and wide and may have "translated" them into the dialect of their own region.

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University

peabody.harvard.edu/all-exhibitions

The Peabody offers a wide range of online exhibitions. They currently include: **The Spirits and the Forest: Dances and Rituals in Colombia's Northwest Amazon; Shadows of Shangri La: Nepal in Photographs, 1975-2011** and **Spying on the Past: Declassified Satellite Images and Archaeology.** Also, **Digging Veritas,** which documents part of the continuing Harvard Archaeology Project that concentrated on the Indian College, founded under Harvard's 1650 charter committing the new institution "to the education of the English and Indian Youth of this Country." It includes archival documents, historic maps, curated objects, personal interviews, and the artefacts found in the course of the project.



Vladimir Nabokov, New York Public Library

New York Public Library

web-static.nypl.org/exhibitions/nabokov/fexhib.htm

Nabokov Under Glass. The extensive Vladimir Nabokov Archive was acquired by NYPL's Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature in 1991. It contains, among much else, albums into which Nabokov transcribed fair copies of his early poems. Also, typescripts of draft translations from Russian into English by the writer's son, Dmitri, and others (heavily corrected by Vladimir Nabokov) for *The Eye*, *Mary*, *Glory*, and *King, Queen, Knave*; early notes for *Pale Fire*; the manuscript for Nabokov's own translation of *Lolita* into Russian and the complete version of his screenplay for the film; the manuscripts on index cards for his final novels, *Ada*, *Transparent Things*, and *Look at the Harlequins!*; and a complete set of all of Nabokov's papers on butterflies, which have been bound into a volume with a dedicatory preface to his wife.

Royal Academy, London

royalacademy.org.uk/article/picasso-and-paper-virtual-exhibition-tour

Picasso and Paper. A 39-minute video tour of the exhibition. You can experience the artist's varied, experimental uses of paper over his 80-year career: drawing on, folding, even burning it. For Picasso, paper was both a tool to explore his ideas and a material with limitless possibilities. He spent decades investigating printmaking techniques, obtaining rare and antique paper from as far as Japan. From drawings that led to towering sculptures to the colossal collage, *Femmes à leur toilette*, these works showcase his constant drive to invent and innovate. You will see Picasso's creative process first-hand in remarkable documentary footage of the artist at work, studies for *Guernica*, and sketchbooks in which masterpieces first took shape.

For quick access to the exhibitions, click on the links in the "Current issue" of the online Caxtonian *on the club's website.*

Special Invitation

The Union League Club invites Caxton Club members to hear **Brian McCammack** discuss his book, ***Landscapes of Hope: Nature and the Great Migration in Chicago***. He will be joined in conversation with **Courtney Joseph** on the Black experience of nature/space in Chicago.

February 25, 12:30pm Central time, via Zoom.

Email Cheryl Ziegler at **cziegler@ulcc.org** to register.

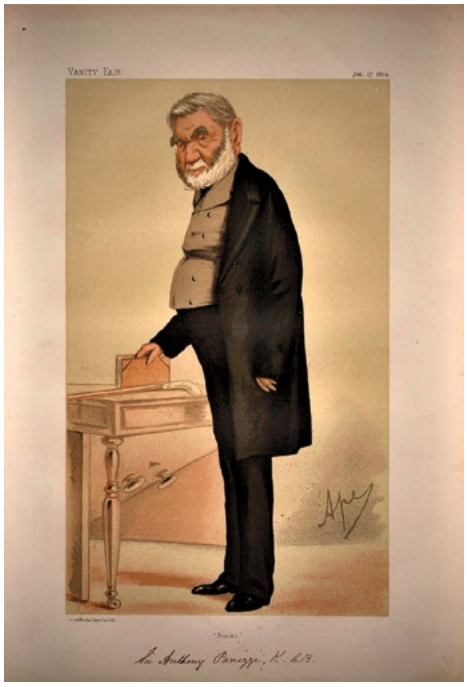
"The Prince of Librarians"

Joseph M. Morgan

The Pincian Gardens, on one of the hills of Rome and near the more famous gardens of the Villa Borghese, are a 16-plus acre park crossed by shaded paths and avenues, each lined by plinths bearing busts of famous and once-famous Italians. There are 228 in all, including the likes of Savonarola, Mazzini, Leopardi, Leonardo, Horace, Virgil, Della Robbia, and Aldus Manutius. One of the busts is of Antonio Genesio Maria Panizzi (1797-1879). He was born in Modena, was a lawyer (University of Parma) and civil servant who became a refugee in Britain and later a naturalized Briton. He was the Principal Librarian of the British Museum (1856-1866) who was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath by Queen Victoria, and died laden with honors as Sir Anthony Panizzi, the very type of an eminent Victorian. His was an extraordinary life – one that, if anyone were given to making biopics of librarians, would make a good film.

To start with, Panizzi was once sentenced to death, fortunately *in absentia*. The authorities in the Duchy of Modena had good cause to fear the *Carbonari*, a secret society of Italian patriots. In 1822, Panizzi was suspected of being a *Carbonaro* (as he probably was) and received a tip-off that he was about to be arrested. At the age of 25, he fled to Switzerland where, early in 1823, he published a scathing attack on Modena's despotic rulers and their show trials. For that he was tried and condemned. The Modenese went so far as to hang effigies of the condemned who were beyond their reach. That is not quite the end of the story.

Later in 1823, Panizzi moved to England. He lived in Liverpool for a while and earned money as an Italian teacher. While in Switzerland, Panizzi was both outraged and amused when he received a bill from the Inspector of Taxes of the Duchy for a sum to cover the fee for the executioner and other costs of the hanging of his effigy. When safely in England, he replied with a letter of refusal signed "The Ghost of Antonio Panizzi" and dated "From the Elysian Fields." Presumably, his legal training had taught him that the legally deceased could not be financially liable. Then began the metamorphosis from the indigent Italian rebel Antonio to the establishment stalwart Sir Anthony. In 1826 he had helped the politician Henry Brougham (pronounced "broom") with a legal matter. When Brougham became Lord Chancellor he obtained a professorship in Italian in what is now University College London for Panizzi and then, in 1831, a post in the British Museum Library.



Sir Anthony Panizzi by "Ape" (Carlo Pellegrini)

His 35-year Museum career saw many notable achievements, as well as a wide acquaintance among the great and good ranging from Palmerston to Napoleon III to Garibaldi. Some, like his vital role in the development of library cataloguing rules, are of intense interest to a minority of librarians and few others; some, like his championing of the Copyright Act of 1842, were essential parts of the creation of the modern national library – a model that has been copied the world over. Panizzi was a practical dreamer, marrying broad concepts of universal access to scholarship (he prepared scholarly editions of the works of the Renaissance poets Boiardo and Ariosto for publication) and practical ingenuity. His most significant practical achievements were the outline of the British Museum Reading Room, realized by the architect Smirke, and the adjacent "Iron Library," bookstacks made entirely of cast iron. The Reading Room, the most hallowed temple of bibliophily in the world, and the bookstacks were declared redundant with the creation of the British Library in 1973, and eventually demolished and replaced with a soulless circular "visitors' space" with gift shops for tourists – a culturally and historically crass act.

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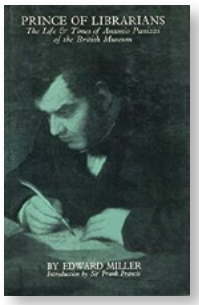

One of the most readable books on librarianship is Edward Miller's Prince of Librarians *(Ohio University Press, 1967), a biography of the Great Panizzi, long out of print but available to the persistent.*

January and February 2021 virtual events

The Caxtonian *lists club events only to ensure a printed record. Full details and registration can be found on our website, under Events.*

January 8, 12:30pm Central time.
Miles Harvey. *"The King of Confidence:* An Interview."

January 19, 6:30pm Central time.
Rebecca Romney and Heather O'Donnell on "Building the Future of Rare Books: Two Booksellers' Experiences in Outreach."

February 3, 6:00pm Central time.
Michelangelo Sabatino and Susan S. Benjamin. *"Modern in the Middle: Chicago Houses, 1929-75."* Co-sponsored with the Chicago Art Deco Society and the Union League Club.

February 12, 12:30pm Central time.
Craig Fehrman on the book *Author In Chief.* Co-sponsored with the Union League Club of Chicago.

February 17, 6:30pm Central time.
Shauna Collier on the The National Museum of African American History and Culture Library.