

The Florida Bibliophile

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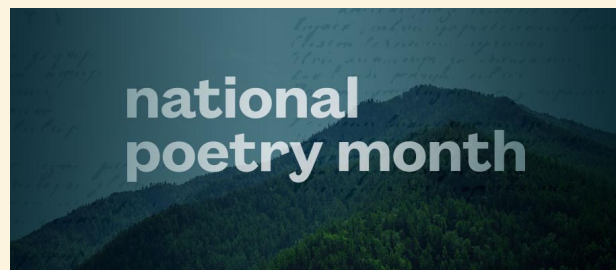


IN THIS ISSUE

- Minutes of the March Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society*..... p. 2
- We Are What We Save: FBS Archives Now Safely Stored at Largo Public Library, by Ben Wiley*..... p. 7
- Dear Bill, Happy 457th!*..... p. 9
- A New Home for the Treasures of the Lambeth Palace Library*..... p. 11
- Larry McMurtry, Author and Bibliophile, 1936–2021*..... p. 15
- Locked Letters: Old Technology Yields to New Technology*..... p. 20
- “April Inventory,” by W. D. Snodgrass*..... p. 22
- Books in Brief*..... p. 23
- Upcoming Events*..... p. 26
- Book Events, Podcasts, and More*..... p. 27
- FBS 2020–2021 Season*..... p. 29
- Endpaper • Connections*..... p. 30

Deadline for the May newsletter is April 28, 2021.
See page 25 for details.

Membership in the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies is included with your FBS membership. The FABS newsletter is now electronic as well as in print. Access a PDF of the Fall 2020 FABS Journal [here](#).



Florida Bibliophile Society
A community of book lovers

Minutes of the March Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society

by Gary Simons, FBS Secretary

Our meeting began with a few preliminaries: President Charles Brown announced that Lola Haskins, a poet who had been our guest speaker once before, would read some of her poetry again at our April meeting [April is National Poetry Month!] and that Gary Simons would be presenting via Zoom in May on “The Publications of American General Interest Book Clubs.”

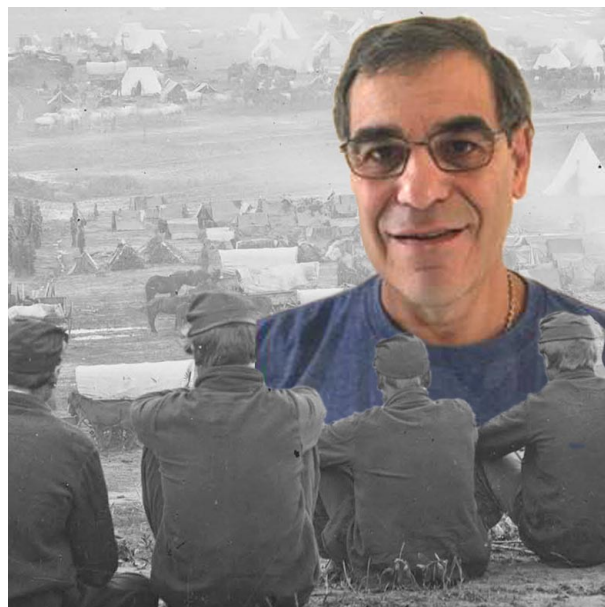
There was a consensus that it would not be safe enough to have a banquet or an in-person meeting in May. If we should come to decide that it was safe enough to have our annual banquet in June, Ed Cifelli would be the banquet speaker and would give a

presentation on the poet John Ciardi.

Next, Jerry Morris introduced our guest speaker, the Jewish History scholar Dr. Eric Steckler. Dr. Steckler is a retired gastroenterologist who practiced in northern Pinellas County for 34 years. Yet history is his passion, both Jewish and general. He has given lectures at Congregation Beth Shalom in Clearwater, Temple Ahavat Shalom in Palm Harbor, the University of South Florida, and the Norman Library in Tampa. He has also lectured on Jewish historical topics and Middle Eastern issues at the Jewish Community

Center of Greater Washington, D.C.

Dr. Steckler has a personal library of over 5,700 books on Jewish history and another 3,000 books on



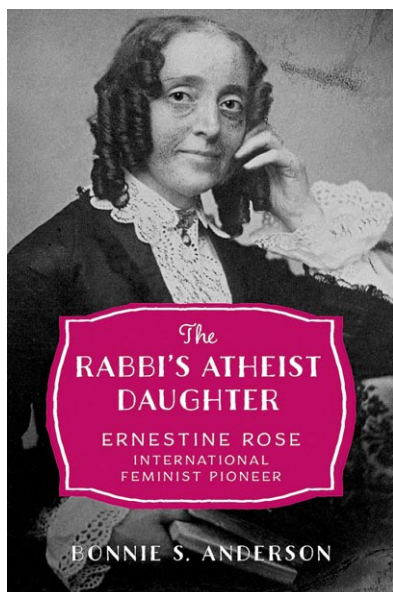
Dr. Eric Steckler in a collage with Civil War photograph by Mathew Brady.

general history. Jerry expressed the hope that when the coronavirus pandemic has finally passed, the members of the Florida Bibliophile Society might visit Dr. Steckler's library.

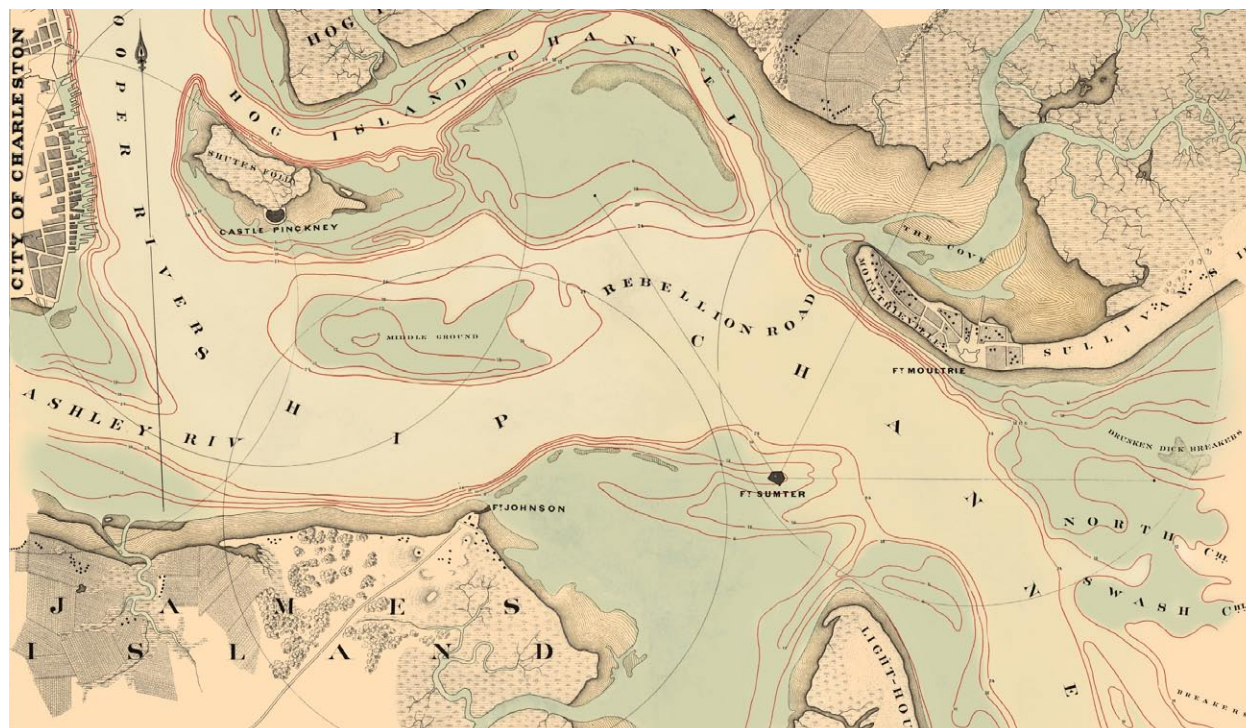
Dr. Steckler's topic was “The Jews in the American Civil War.” Although the great wave of Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the United States would only begin around 1880, a smaller wave of Jewish emigration, starting in the 1840s and primarily from Germany, had by 1860 increased the estimated number of American Jews to about 150,000. Jews were embedded in the social orders of both the North and the South, and accordingly served on both sides of the war.

Before the war, as a small and mostly foreign-born minority, understandably most Jews stayed out of politics. Since many abolitionists, from William Lloyd Garrison on, were also anti-Semitic, it is not surprising that most Jews stayed out of that movement – the suffragist, abolitionist, and free thinker Ernestine Rose being a noted exception. Similarly, as mostly city dwellers, Jews were not among the major slave dealers in the South, although

– continued on page 4 –



Ernestine Rose (1810–1892), the subject of The Rabbi's Atheist Daughter by Bonnie S. Anderson, was an abolitionist, suffragist, and “major intellectual force” in women's rights in the 19th century. Like many Jews of the era, she had emigrated from Prussia, where as the child of a well-to-do rabbi she was well educated and independent. She went to civil court in 1826 over a forced betrothal and prevailed. Over the next ten years, she traveled, and in 1836, emigrated to the U.S.

Minutes, continued

This period map shows the setting of Fort Sumter, a Union fortress that guarded the harbor of Charleston. The city is located at the upper left. The Civil War began here on April 12, 1861, when the South Carolina militia (the Confederate Army had not yet been formed) fired on the fort in response to President Lincoln's announcement that he would reinforce and resupply the fort. A two-day battle resulted in the defeat of the U.S. forces at Fort Sumter. Union forces were evacuated on April 13 by the steamer Isabel, owned by Moses Cohen Mordecai, a Charleston shipping agent.



The Confederate States issued their first currency shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. Ultimately, the Confederacy would issue \$1.7 billion in currency, in denominations of 50¢, \$1, \$2, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, \$500, and \$1,000. The currency was backed only by a promise to pay after the war, and as the Confederacy's fortunes declined, so did the worth of the currency. The \$2 dollar bill shown here bears an image of Judah P. Benjamin, a Jewish New Orleans lawyer, who would serve as Confederate Attorney General, then Secretary of War, and finally Secretary of State.

Minutes, continued

some less prominent dealers were Jewish.

Nevertheless, from the very beginning of the conflict, Jews were involved on both sides. Dr. Steckler provided us the benefit of his meticulous research as he detailed the roles (and often post-war biographies) of Jewish participants in the conflict. At Fort Sumpter, for example, a Jewish doctor designed the hospital associated with the fort. The South Carolina flag was first raised over the fort by a Jew, and a Jewish merchant owned the steamship that removed the Union commander Major Robert Anderson from the fort; that same steamship later became a blockade runner for the South.

Overall, it is estimated that two to three thousand Jews served in the Confederate army, and that seven to eight thousand served in the Union army. Of all

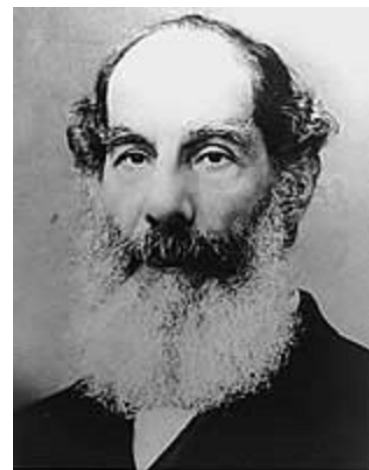
these, perhaps six hundred or so died, either in battle or from disease. To give lie to the then common canard that “Jews won’t fight,” Jewish soldiers took pictures to document their presence. Dr. Steckler reported that in one battle, two sons of a family, fighting on opposite sides, were only about 150 yards apart.

Jews were also prominent on both home fronts. Jewish manufacturers made uniforms for Northern soldiers, treated Union soldiers at Jews Hospital (now Mt. Sinai) in New York, and sold \$200 million of Union bonds in Germany, thereby financing about 10% of federal war expenditures.

In the South, Judah P. Benjamin, a Jewish New Orleans lawyer, served at various times as Confederate Attorney General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State.

He was the first Jew in any American cabinet, and his face was on some Confederate currency. Further, Benjamin, along with David Levee Yulee (of Florida!) were both Jewish senators before the war.

In 1862, Jews were allowed to be chaplains in the Union army. At about the same time, a Northern Rabbi prominently published a sermon invoking the phrase “four score and seven.” As Lincoln was known to read the sermons of this chaplain, one wonders if this was the source of Lincoln’s use of this wording for the Gettysburg Address. Religious ties often



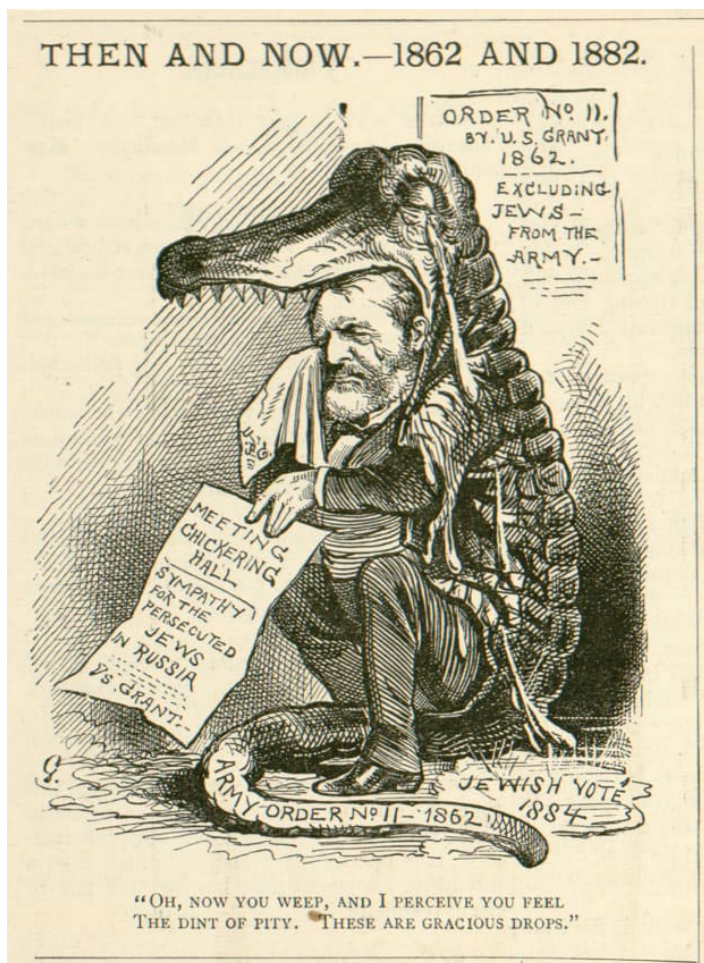
July 4, 1863, was a Saturday, and that morning, a Sabbath gathering was being held at Philadelphia’s Mikveh Israel Congregation. The Rabbi Sabato Morais, along with his congregation was waiting for news of the outcome of the Battle of Gettysburg, where it seemed the Confederacy might break through Union lines and threaten Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. The uncertainty of that battle and the particular day in the Jewish calendar called for solemnity, but Morais wanted also wanted to reflect on the meaning of July 4. His words that day, “I am not indifferent, my dear friends, to the event, which four score and seven years ago, brought to this new world light and joy,” were published in a prominent pro-Lincoln weekly, and indeed, Lincoln may have adapted this very phrase for his Gettysburg Address in November of that year at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

FOR HAVANA VIA KEY WEST.
 TO SAIL ON TUESDAY, THE 4TH OF
 MARCH, AT — O’CLOCK.
 THE UNITED STATES MAIL

ISABEL,
 WM. ROLLINS, Commander,
 WILL leave CHARLESTON for HAVANA, via KEY WEST, on the 4th and 19th, and Havana for Charleston, via Key West, on the 10th and 25th of each month.
 The ISABEL now connects at Havana with the U. S. Mail Steamship Company’s Line of Steamers for San Francisco, via Aspinwall, and will carry the Pacific Mails. For Passage, apply to
MORDECAI & CO., 110 East Bay.
 Feb 26 tuthsm4

The Isabel was owned by Mordecai & Co., the shipping firm of Moses Cohen Mordecai, a prominent Charleston businessman. The Isabel was instrumental in the evacuation of Fort Sumter in the attack on the fort that started the Civil War.



Minutes, continued

Major-General Ulysses S. Grant issued Order No. 11 on December 17, 1862, during the Vicksburg campaign. The order was issued to suppress illegal trade in Southern cotton and enforce the Union embargo on the Confederacy. Grant blamed this trade on Jewish merchants, possibly because of a single incident. His order expelled all Jews from his military district — areas of Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. In Paducah, Kentucky, 30 Jewish families were given 24 hours to leave, including U.S. Army veterans. Jews throughout the U.S. were of course horrified by the order, as were many other Americans. Prominent members of Congress attempted to censure Grant, but the motion was defeated in the Republican-controlled Congress. Many newspapers railed against the order. Lincoln overturned the order but retained Grant. Nevertheless, after the war, Order No. 11 hung over Grant's public and private affairs, when later in life Grant was courting Jewish votes and Jewish dollars. In the cartoon above, sympathy for Russian Jews expressed by Grant at an 1882 presentation is seen as "crocodile tears" in light of Order No. 11.

transcended the sectional conflict — Union Jewish officers frequently attended Shabbat dinners with Southern Jewish families.

The most notorious anti-Semitic episode of the war occurred during the Vicksburg campaign of 1862. Lincoln wanted trade to follow the flag as

Union armies advanced, and encouraged the rapid involvement of cotton merchants in occupied territories. Unfortunately, there were some episodes of malfeasance by these merchants, and Jews were unfairly singled out as the culprits. Grant was both opposed to the policy and determined to stamp out any corruption, so he ordered the notorious General Order #11 in December of 1862, under which all Jews as a class were ordered expelled from his theater of war. In Paducah, Kentucky, thirty Jewish families received notice to leave the city within 24 hours and had to abandon their homes. Outraged Jews appealed to Lincoln, who quickly countermanded the order and wrote "to condemn a class is, to say the least, to wrong the good with the bad. I do not like to hear a class or nationality condemned on account of a few sinners." Grant later atoned for his actions with pro-Jewish policies and political appointments during his years as President (1869–1877).

Jewish officers were prominent in both armies. Four Jewish soldiers reached the rank of General in the Union Army. While there were no Jewish generals in the more aristocratic Confederate Army, there were Jewish colonels. The Florida city of Ft. Myers is, in fact, named after the Jewish Confederate Colonel Abraham Myers, who served as Quartermaster General of the Confederate Army.

Six Union Medal of Honor winners were Jews, including Leopold Karpeles, an emigrant from Prague, a master of five languages, who went to Texas in 1849, moved to Massachusetts and became an abolitionist upon the outbreak of the Civil War, was wounded in the Battle of the Wilderness (May 1864), married his nurse from a Washington



The Medal of Honor, the highest honor given to American military personnel, was introduced in the Civil War. The Navy version was approved by President Abraham Lincoln in December 1861 — the Army version (shown above) followed in July 1862. It was the only badge of honor offered by the U.S. during the Civil War, in which 1,500 medals were given.

Minutes, concluded

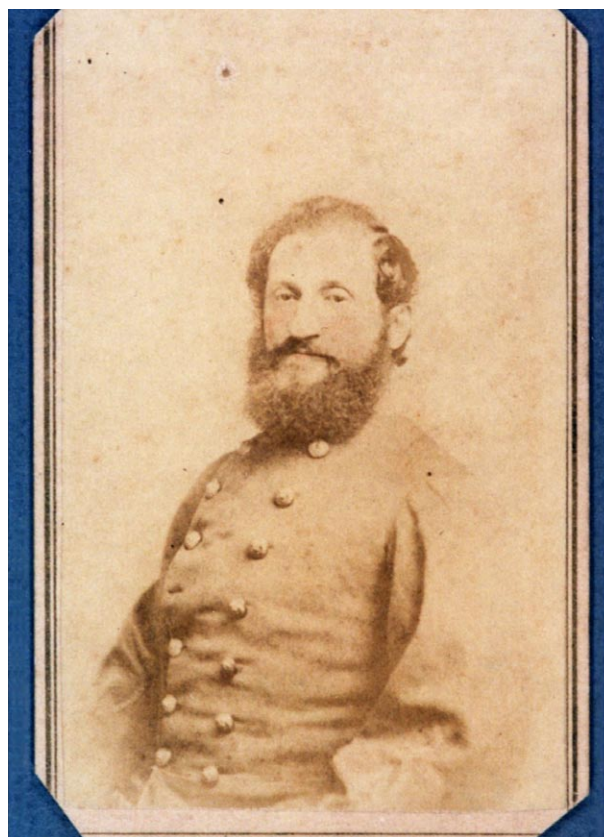
The Civil War created a need for hundreds of thousands of uniforms in an era when most clothing was either homemade or custom made. Ready-to-wear clothing was available but limited. Even uniforms were created in homes under government contracts. During the Civil War, the need for tens of thousands of uniforms met the Industrial Revolution, and ready-to-wear factories were created to make these uniforms and eventually the clothing that most Americans would wear. Above: a private in the Union army.

hospital, and later became a fixture in Washington society. Edwin Moise, a Sephardic Jew living in Charleston, served with equal gallantry on the Confederate side. Leading a cavalry company called Moise's Rangers, he fought in the "Great Beefsteak Raid" (September 1864) to secure desperately needed supplies for the Confederates. After the war, he served as Adjutant General for the state of South Carolina.

Dr. Steckler presented summary biographies of several Jews who fought at Gettysburg. In each case, the documented record, based on letters and published reminiscences, shows courage and tenacity in combat as well as success and contribution to society after the war. Steckler explained that as some Jews met with success and gained prominence in the postwar years, especially after 1880, anti-Semitism became more pronounced in the U.S.

In closing, Dr. Steckler noted that the Civil War

helped the acculturation and Americanization of Jews, that they gained confidence about their roles and positions as Americans, and that led to the establishment of national Jewish organizations.



Jews first arrived in the Carolinas in 1600s. By the 1800s, they were well established in American society there. One Jewish Carolinian, Abraham C. Myers, graduated from West Point in 1833 and fought in the Seminole Wars and the Mexican War. He rose to the rank of colonel in the Confederate army and became administrator of the largest Confederate supply bureau, with quartermasters, paymasters, manufacturing, and special taxation units through the Southern states. Myers had performed a similar duty in the more recent years of his career in the U.S. Army before he resigned his commission on the eve of the Civil War. His effectiveness as quartermaster for the Confederate army was limited by the poor quality of the Southern railroad system and the steadily decreasing value of Confederate dollars. Supply problems throughout the Confederate effort resulted. In 1863, the Confederate Congress raised the rank of the quartermaster to general, assuming Myers would be elevated to the new position, but President Jefferson Davis appointed General Alexander Lawton. Myers was passed over possibly because of an insult by his wife toward Davis's wife. Myers refused to serve under Lawton and was effectively removed from the Army. He would remain bitter about this incident for the rest of his life.

In 1850, in response to several killings by Seminoles, a new fort was built on the Caloosahatchee River. At the suggestion of General David Emanuel Twiggs, the fort was named Fort Myers in honor of the general's son-in-law, Brevet Colonel Abraham Charles Myers, quartermaster for the Army's Department of Florida.

After the conclusion of the presentation, it was brought to the attention of the group that FBS's archives were now safely stored at the Largo library. Treasurer Linda Morris's suggestion that FBS make a donation to the

library met with general approval. And there was some discussion regarding a possible FBS outdoor banquet or picnic in June depending upon the status of the pandemic.



We Are What We Save: FBS Archives Now Safely Stored at Largo Public Library, by Ben Wiley

The Florida Bibliophile Society archives have a new home. Carl Mario Nudi, FBS Archivist, reports they are now located safe, secure, and accessible at Largo Public Library in mid-Pinellas County. On March 12, 2021, Largo Library Assistant Director Geri Remming welcomed the accumulated records of the Florida Bibliophile Society to this award-winning public library.

FBS once kept the archives at the University of South Florida, Tampa, then at the University of Tampa as part of the Tampa Book Arts Studio. But our member affiliations with those universities changed, so for a while, the archives sat ignominiously in a sterile concrete-block storage unit in Bradenton.

Now the archives are housed at Largo Library, the recipient of the 2019 Florida Library Association's Maria Chavez-Hernandez "Libraries Change Peoples' Lives" Award. Noted for its community outreach, the library has indeed changed lives via its Bookmobile, ESL courses for new immigrants, nationally recognized Genealogy Research Center, extensive Children and Teen programs, and even a Doggie Reads program where kids polish their



The Largo Public Library traces its history to 1914, when the Women's Club of Largo created a small library for the town's 350 residents. The library's current facility, completed in 2005, now welcomes more than 500,000 visitors a year.

literacy skills by reading aloud to their pooch pals.

And now community support includes becoming the official repository for the FBS archives. It's quite appropriate that they've returned to a book-centric, book-celebratory location. Thank you, Largo Library!

Over the years, FBS has had a collegial relationship with Largo Library. Lee Harrer, one of the founding members of FBS in 1983, has long been a supporter of the Largo Library Foundation, the main fund-raising arm of the library. And Jay Dobkin, another founding member of FBS, served as a Largo Library volunteer. Jay is even featured in a library display of black and white photos of the early days of Largo Library. Ben Wiley, FBS member and vice-president of the Friends of Largo Library, helped in the transition of the archives to their new location. Of course, FBS was one of the initial financial supporters of the Largo Library Bookmobile, even



FBS Archivist Carl Nudi (left) and Largo Library Assistant Director Geri Remming (right) move the FBS archives to their new home in the Largo Public Library.

FBS Archives, concluded

garnering brand-name advertising on the side of the bookmobile! Wherever the Largo Library Bookmobile travels in mid-Pinellas, the Florida Bibliophile Society name greets those eager patrons. That Largo Library has become the official venue of the FBS archives just underscores the ongoing and mutual relationship between the library and Florida Bibliophiles.

What's in the FBS archives, you may be wondering? Lots of stuff, according to Archivist Nudi, who reminds us we've been around for about 40 years. He maintains an up-to-date accumulation and accounting of all things Florida Bibliophilic. Presently, there are 16 archival quality, acid-free boxes for operational and historical records, FABS journals, and almost 40 years of FBS newsletters. All the recent FBS newsletters are now digital, but Carl makes two print copies of each issue for the archives.

Below: After the closing of the Tampa Book Arts Studio at the University of Tampa, the FBS archives were placed in "ignominious" storage locker. Above right: Carl Nudi arranges and labels the FBS archives in their new, bright location in the Largo Public Library. Below right: The FBS archives in their new home.

These newsletters are rich in text and photographs, a complete record of our endeavors and interests, so we ensure there's an old-school, analogue, printed history available for anyone to peruse.

We define archives as "a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people." Indeed, FBS has a storied history revealed in its archives, now at home in the Largo Public Library.



Dear Bill, Happy 457th!

On April 23, 2021 – give or take – William Shakespeare’s 457th birthday will be celebrated around the world. Full disclosure: We cannot be certain of the exact date of William Shakespeare’s birth. Two dates we do know are the day he was baptized – April 26, 1564 – and the day he died – April 23, 1616. However, it was customary in England in 1564 to wait three days before baptizing an infant. So the best guess is April 23, 1564.

In the 30 or so years of Shakespeare’s adult life, he created one of the greatest bodies of literature in history and one of the most widely performed.

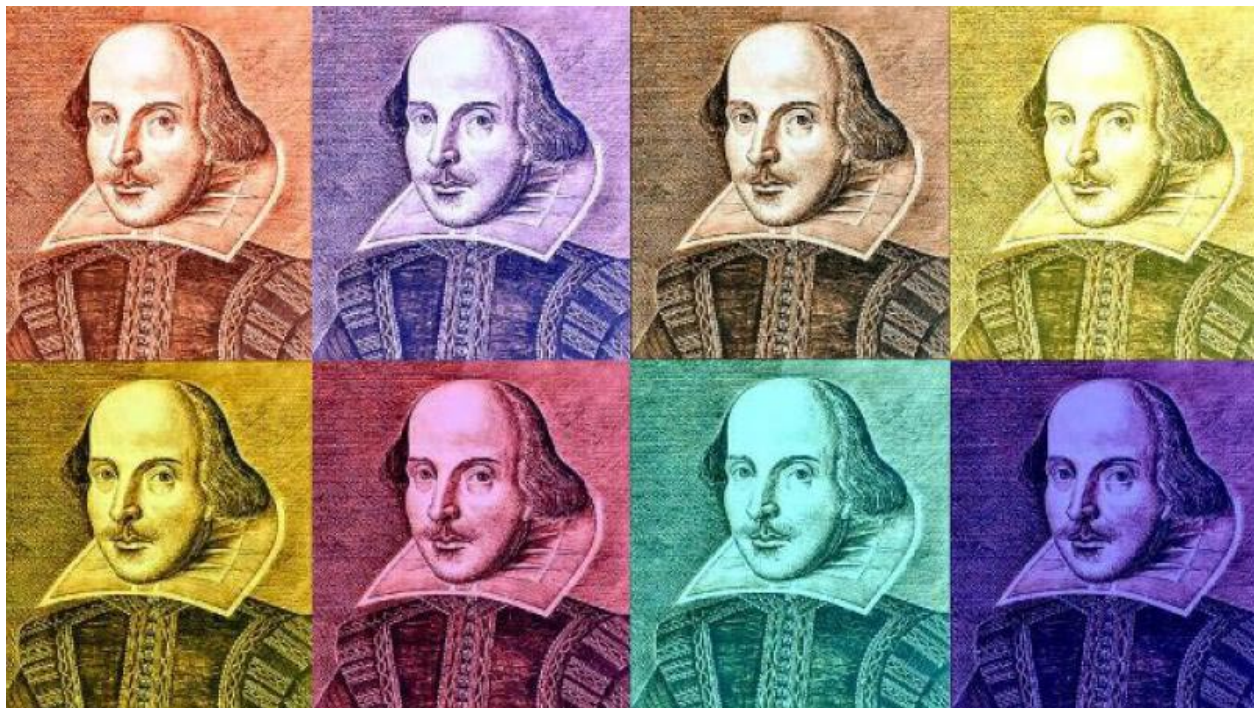
Shakespeare was well-known and popular in his day. While *Hamlet* is his most popular play today – perhaps because of its resonance with 19th and 20th century tastes – the most popular plays in Shakespeare’s time were his histories.

His career began with histories, the three parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III* – often taken together as a tetralogy called The Henriad. These plays were produced during 1590–1593, based on events that had taken place barely over a hundred years before the plays: the reigns of Henry VI and Richard the III lasting from 1470 to 1485.

In those times, there was no one in England more powerful or impressive than the monarch, and these histories were of great significance and interest to the English. We could compare them to a Ken Burns documentary: they are at once about other people and about us – they tell a great story in great style – and like Burns’s documentaries, where else would we learn these stories about ourselves in such a concise and appealing format?

As Shakespeare bibliographer Laura Estill points out, just as George Lucas built on the success of the original *Star Wars* trilogy in a prequel trilogy, so too, Shakespeare’s next histories went back before Henry VI in *Richard II* and further than that in *King John*. His next three histories filled in the period leading up to *Henry VI* with *Henry IV*, parts I and II, and *Henry V* – these plays together with *Richard II* are sometimes referred to as Shakespeare’s Second Henriad, which covers the years 1377 to 1422.

The Second Henriad is sometimes called Shakespeare’s epic because it follows Prince Hal in his rise to power and ascent to the throne of England as Henry V. The BBC has brought new attention to this story through the television series *The Hollow Crown* (2012, 2016) starring Jeremy



Sources: *Shakespeare Online*; *Criterion Collection*; *DVD Beaver*; *Shakespeare.org*; *British Council*

Dear Bill, Happy 457th! ,concluded

Irons as King Henry IV and Tom Hiddleston as Prince Hal. Laura Estill points out that the series attracted a new generation of fans to these plays.

Late in his career, Shakespeare anticipated the *Star Wars* pattern again by looking at a time after the first Henriad in *Henry VIII*, who reigned from 1509 to 1547. He was also the father of Queen Elizabeth I, who was queen of England during most of Shakespeare's life – she died in 1603.

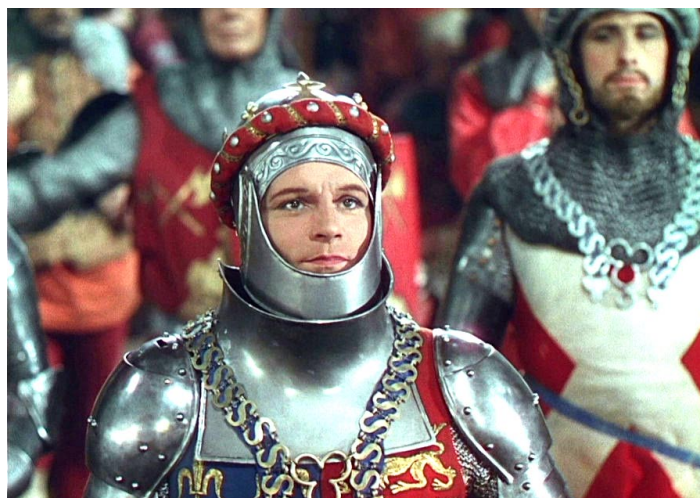
It was during a performance of *Henry VIII* that a special effect – a cannon shot – started the fire that burned the Globe Theater to the ground.

Henry VIII was written collaboratively by Shakespeare and another well-known playwright, John Fletcher. It was one of 14 Shakespeare plays that were written collaboratively, the other known co-authors being George Wilkins and Thomas Middelton and suspected co-authors that include Thomas Kyd, Thomas Nashe, and George Peele. Collaborations were common, and modern scholars continue to search for traces of Shakespeare. Computer analyses of the texts of plays have suggested Shakespeare's contributions to plays that are ascribed to other authors.

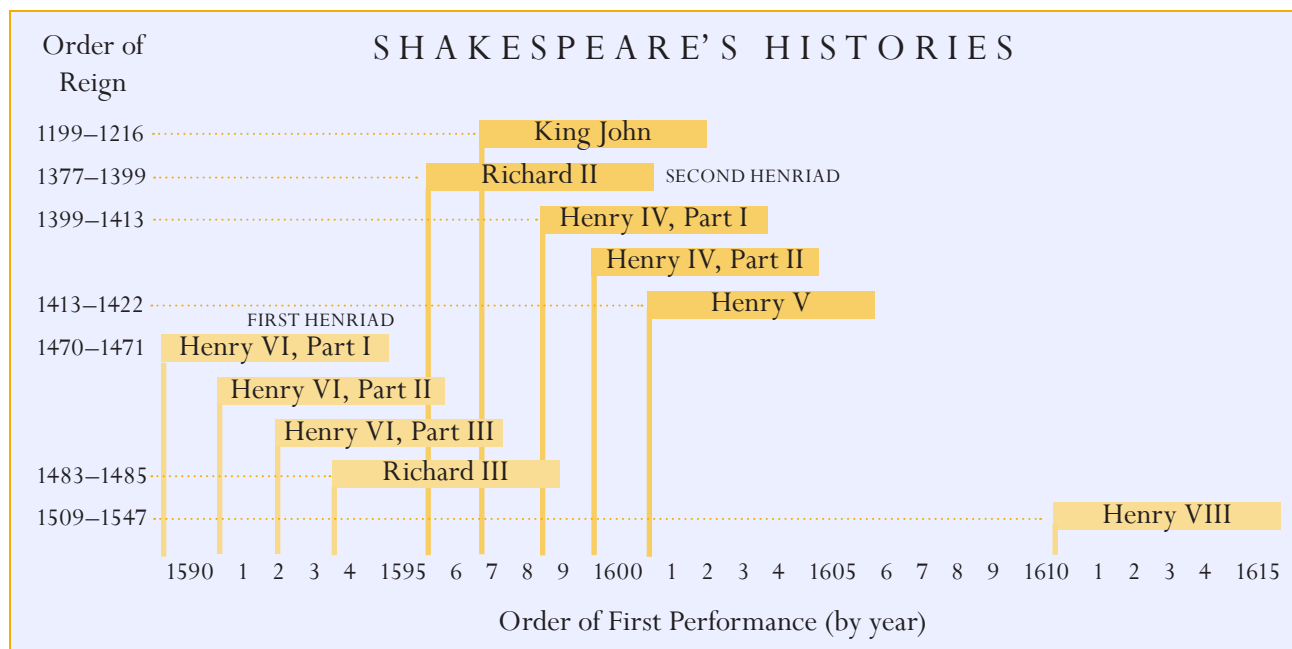
Why not celebrate Shakespeare's 457th with a little history?



Jeremy Irons (left) as Henry IV and Tom Hiddleston (right) as Prince Hal in *The Hollow Crown* (2012), a BBC production of Shakespeare's Second Henriad.



Laurence Olivier stars in *Henry V* (1944), a "sumptuous Technicolor rendering" with a thrilling re-creation of the battle of Agincourt. Olivier in his prime as director and actor.



A New Home for the Treasures of the Lambeth Palace Library

For 800 years, Lambeth Palace has been the official London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest official of the Church of England. It stands across the Thames from Westminster Palace where the Houses of Parliament meet – church and state.

In addition to being an official residence, Lambeth Palace is also the principal repository of records for the Church of England. This collection is thought to be the most extensive religious collection outside the Vatican.

Lambeth Palace Library may be England's first public library, founded as such by Archbishop Richard Bancroft in 1610, when he bequeathed his personal collection of books and manuscripts to the English people. The Library celebrated its 400th anniversary in 2010 with an exhibition of some of its rarest treasures and some of its most unusual, such as the shell of Archbishop William Laud's tortoise, given to him in 1633 and which freely roamed the garden.

Beyond the ecclesiastical records, Lambeth Palace Library contains many literary treasures, including over 4,500 manuscripts dating back to the 9th century and 200,000 printed books. The ancient palace is not designed to store these types of

materials, and Lambeth's librarians and church officials worried about deterioration of the library's holdings. The setting and nature of the palace exposes its extraordinary collection to pollution from the heavily used road that runs between the palace and the river, the risk of flooding from the river, and fire damage in the old structure.

The less than ideal storage conditions and the space needed to properly house

the vast collections motivated the building of a new library. Originally scheduled to open in 2020, Covid forced a delay until mid-2021.

Sources: BBC; *The Guardian*; Lambeth Palace Library; *Financial Times*; *Living Church*; *Deze*

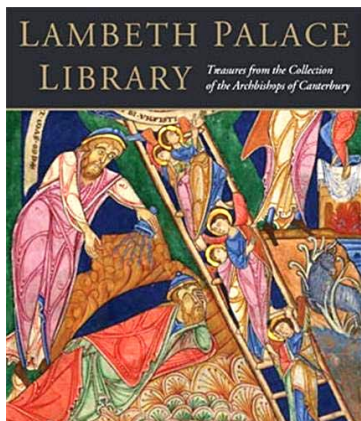


An aerial view of Lambeth Palace. The historic library and great hall are at the lower right. Their materials will be moved to the new library which is to be situated at the far end of the garden, on the curve at the upper left.

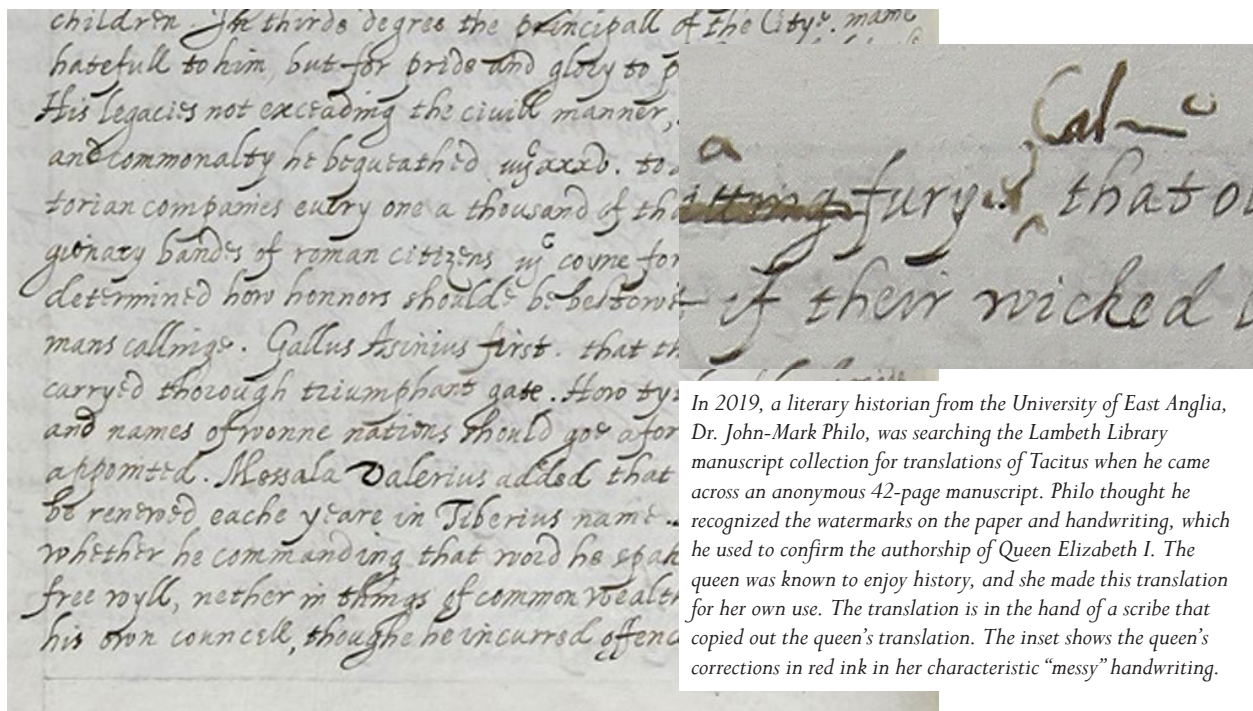
The firm of Wright & Wright was chosen for the design over other more well-known international firms. The area designated for the new library was at the far end of the archbishop's garden, effectively shielding the garden from the noise of the adjoining busy roadway. Rather than seeking a showstopper, the library wanted the new building to blend in with the garden wall, and the design reflects the serious purpose of the new building: to protect the Lambeth archive.

The library's director Declan Kelly emphasizes that building's purpose is to safeguard the collection. He quipped that there is no cafe and no gift shop – this is a working library. According to architect Clare Wright, "There's a moral imperative that the building is long-lasting and well-built, but that it's not extravagant or indulgent."

The new building will allow better organization and greater access to the materials. Both scholars and the public will be able to see more of the library's extensive collections, which are still being explored. For example, in 2019, a scholar discovered the annotations of Queen Elizabeth I in a copy of the *Annals* by Roman historian Tacitus, which as a student of history she had translated for her use.



Lambeth Palace Library: Treasures from the Collection of the Archbishop of Canterbury was published in 2010.

Lambeth, continued

In 2019, a literary historian from the University of East Anglia, Dr. John-Mark Philo, was searching the Lambeth Library manuscript collection for translations of Tacitus when he came across an anonymous 42-page manuscript. Philo thought he recognized the watermarks on the paper and handwriting, which he used to confirm the authorship of Queen Elizabeth I. The queen was known to enjoy history, and she made this translation for her own use. The translation is in the hand of a scribe that copied out the queen's translation. The inset shows the queen's corrections in red ink in her characteristic "messy" handwriting.



The new Lambeth Palace Library is seen in this rendering of a view from the Archbishop's Garden. The new library brings the Lambeth collection into one facility. It is now spread among several buildings and a warehouse.

Lambeth, continued

Old and New: On the left is the reading hall of the new Lambeth Palace Library. On the right is the Great Hall, probably one of the earliest buildings in the complex. It was used for events for many years, but fell into disuse in the late 18th century. By the early 1800s, it was “dirty and neglected” according to Edward Blore, the architect who undertook renovations in 1828. It was decided that the Great Hall would become a library, and it was outfitted with magnificent carved shelves that projected from both walls to form bays. In the early 2000s, the hall was again in need of repair, and it was completely restored – inside and out – in 2016 by Ablett Architects.



The Lambeth Apocalypse (MS209) was created in the late 13th century. It is copiously illustrated with many full-page paintings as well as the traditional gold-leafed polychrome paintings that accompany the carefully written text. It is further embellished with marginal miniatures.

Lambeth, concluded

At almost two feet tall and over a foot wide (520 x 355 mm), the Lambeth Bible (MS 3) is one of the finest examples of the giant Bibles, produced in Romanesque England. Created in the mid 1100s, the massive work was made as two volumes. The first volume is in Lambeth Palace Library and includes Genesis to Job on 328 leaves of vellum. The second volume, containing material from Psalms to Revelation, is incomplete; it is held by the Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery. The page shown here is from the book of Ruth, the story of one of the Bible's heroines. It is characteristic of the Lambeth Bible – richly painted and decorated with gold leaf. The magnificent capital R that stands on top of the illustration is typical of the luxury given to even the minor decorations in the Bible.

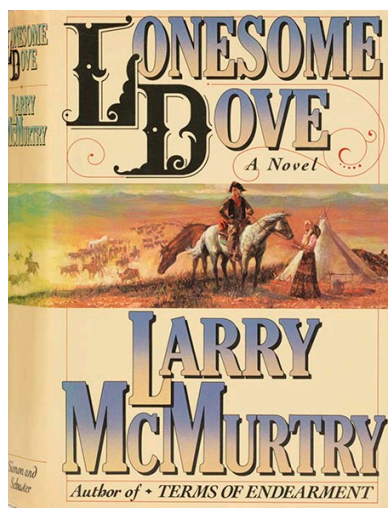
The three-panel illustration shows (left) Boaz discovering Ruth as she gleanes the remnants in a field harvested of barley, (center) Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi advises her to go to Boaz and uncover his feet and await instructions, and (right) Ruth does so. Ruth and Boaz will marry and have a son in the lineage of Jesus.

Larry McMurry, Author and Bibliophile, 1936–2021



Larry McMurry was not a late bloomer. In his late 20s, he published the three novels of *Thalia: A Texas Trilogy*. The three novels, published in 1961, 1963, and 1966, were *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), *Leaving Cheyenne* (1963), and *The Last Picture Show* (1966). *Horseman, Pass By* became the 1963 movie *Hud*, directed by Martin Ritt, starring Paul Newman, Melvyn Douglas, Patricia Neal, and Brandon deWilde, with music by Elmer Bernstein – all heavy-hitters. The film premiered at the 24th Venice International Film Festival and was well received. It was critical and commercial success. McMurry was 27 years old.

The Last Picture Show became a film in 1971 with



Lonesome Dove (1985) has been described as Larry McMurry's masterpiece. At 843 pages with dozens of minor characters and incidents it has been described as an epic. McMurry compared it to *Gone With the Wind*. second memoir. It was McMurry's greatest effort to tell a true story about the West, rather than the romanticized stories that were the stock in trade of Western novels and movies.

similar results. *Leaving Cheyenne* became the film *Lovin' Molly* in 1974 – despite its accomplished director, Sidney Lumet, and its bankable stars, Anthony Perkins, Beau Bridges, Blythe Danner, and Susan Sarandon, it was less successful. McMurry said in later years that he hated the movie, which he felt was not faithful to the book.

This was the just the opening chapter of McMurry's life as an author, screenwriter, bibliophile, and book store owner. During the next 50 years, he

would publish dozens of books – both fiction and nonfiction – and short stories, and he scripted two dozen productions for film and television. Most of his output was about the West, either the Old West or contemporary Texas. His books were often brutal portrayals aimed at demythologizing the highly romanticized cowboy and frontier lifestyles.

McMurry won many awards, among them the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the Spur Award for Best Western Novel, both for *Lonesome Dove* (1985) – which McMurry later described as the *Gone With the Wind* of the West. He and his long-time collaborator Diana Ossana won four awards for the screen adaptation of Annie Proulx's short story *Brokeback Mountain* (2006): Writers Guild of America Award for Best Adapted Screenplay, Academy Award for Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay), Golden Globe Award for Best Screenplay (Motion Picture), and the BAFTA Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. McMurry received the National Humanities Medal from President Barack Obama in 2015.

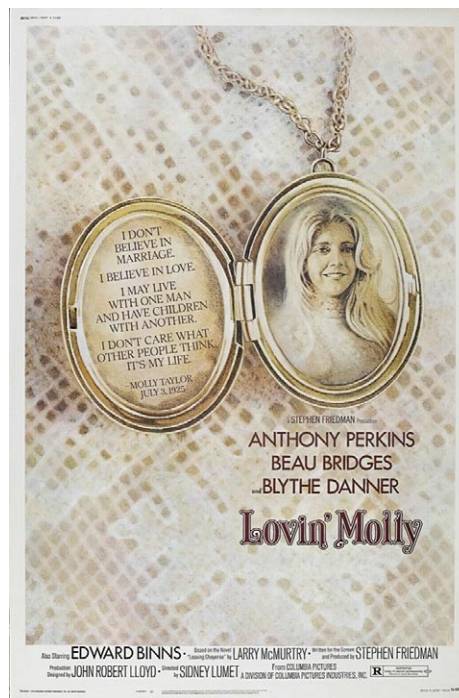
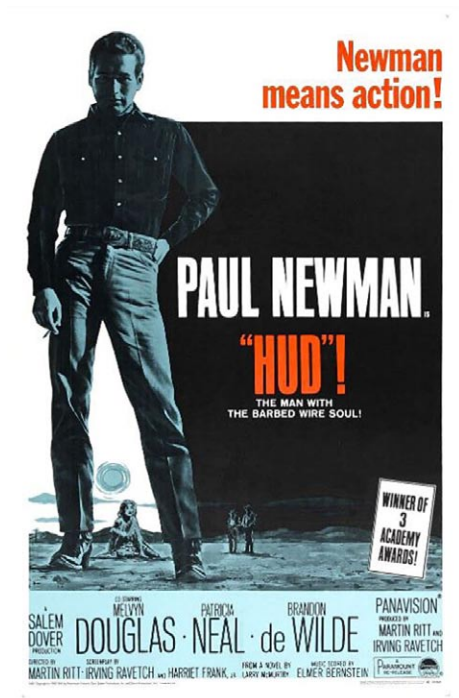
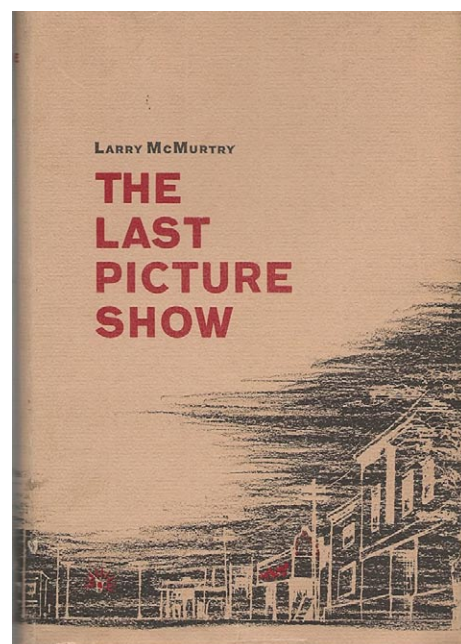
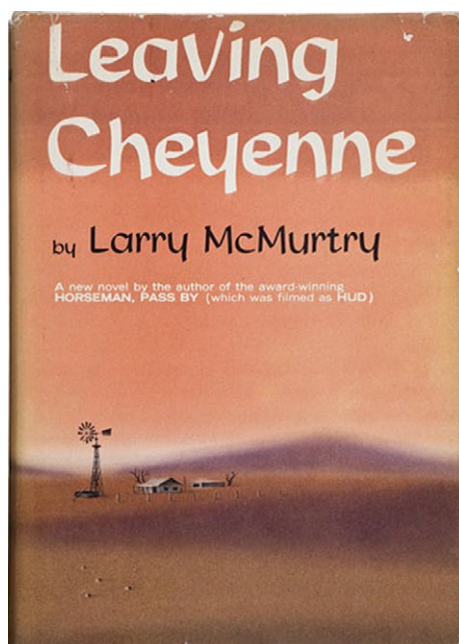
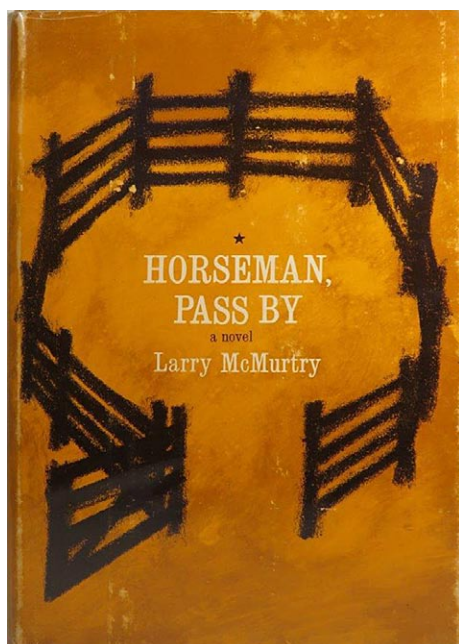
Texas Roots

McMurry was born in Archer City, Texas, and grew up on his parents' ranch outside the city. The city would become a model for the town of Thalia, which is a setting for several of his books and stories. He left Archer City for the University of North Texas in Denton, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1958. He earned a Master of Arts from Rice University in Houston in 1960.

The following year, McMurry was off to California as a Wallace Stegner Fellow at the Stanford University Creative Writing Center, where he

— continued on page 17 —

McMurtry, continued



Larry McMurtry's first three novels in their first editions — *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), *Leaving Cheyenne* (1963), and *The Last Picture Show* (1966) — and the posters for their corresponding theatrical releases — *Hud* (1963), *Lovin' Molly* (1974), and *The Last Picture Show* (1971).

McMurtry, continued

studied the craft of fiction under Frank O'Connor and Malcolm Cowley. Also in the program at that time were Wendell Berry, Peter S. Beagle, Gurney Norman, and notably, Ken Kesey, who would remain a good friend – Kesey and his Merry Pranksters' visit with McMurtry in 1966 is memorialized in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968).

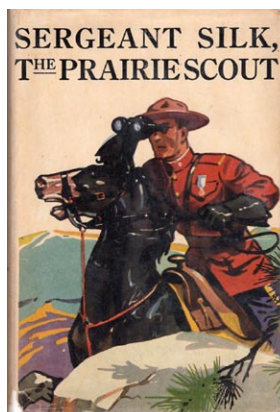
In the early 1970s, McMurtry lived in the Washington, D.C., area, teaching creative writing at American University and George Mason University. McMurtry lived just across the border in Virginia and kept a small apartment above Booked Up, the bookstore he had established in 1971 in Georgetown. More about that a little later.

For 23 years, McMurtry lived outside Texas. He visited occasionally. A 1972 visit, fresh from his work with Peter Bogdanovich on the film set in his hometown, *The Last Picture Show*, "reminded him of everything he hated" about the town he was raised in. He wrote about one summer visit, part of which was his desire to test his feeling of connection to Texas. He felt nothing.

For 23 years, McMurtry wrote – often about the Texas he was raised in – but with the feeling he would never return, even as he was building a remarkable career as a premier writer about Texas, though books about Texas are a minority of his novels. He had made a life for himself, and he was successful and famous.

Nevertheless, in 1997, McMurtry did return to Archer City. He purchased a large home he had had his eye on as early as 1962, when the price at that time, \$35,000, was well beyond his means. When he purchased the house in the late 1980s, he said that the price was not much higher. He renovated the house with bookshelves throughout – but there are no curtains or blinds because McMurtry points out that the "beauty of this house... is the light." In 2000, he told *Architectural Digest*:

"Sunset is the magic time here.... I can see deep into the West. The sky wasn't big enough for me in Virginia; I was depressed. I need big sky."



Sergeant Silk, *The Prairie Scout* (1929) by Robert Leighton, prolific British author of adventure stories. The first words of the book set the tone:

"If you ask me, there's nothing like riding across the open prairie for quickening a fellow's eyesight," remarked the Honourable Percy Rapson, breaking a long spell of silence. "There's so little to be seen, anyhow, except the grass and the flowers, that he's bound to catch sight of anything unusual."

Sergeant Silk smiled at his companion's boyish enthusiasm for the open-air life of the plains.

Larry McMurtry, Bibliophile

The house McMurtry grew up in on a ranch outside of Archer City had no books. There was no need for them in a household where life revolved around cattle ranching. McMurtry was quoted in *Bibliostyle* (2019) by Nina Freudenberger:

"My earliest encounter with books came when I was six years old," he says. "My cousin Robert Hilbern came to me when he was on his way to World War II and left me nineteen volumes of boy's books. Some were from the Poppy Ott series"—boys' action stories—"and the others were from the Jerry Todd adventures and *Sergeant Silk, the Prairie Scout*."

From that beginning, Larry's interest in writing and in books only grew. He began collecting books when he was an undergraduate at the University of North Texas, as many college students do, with the acquisition of a few cherished volumes. He went to Rice University for his master's degree and then to Stanford University for a fellowship in the Wallace Stegner Institute. While there, he worked as a book scout.

The story goes that in the summer of 1961, having returned to Texas – Dallas, not Archer City – Larry McMurtry and his first wife Jo were expecting a child; the couple needed extra money. McMurtry walked into McMurray's Book Store on Commerce Street in downtown Dallas and asked for work. The manager, Bob Gilliland, gave him a job "sorting and stacking books at the McMurray warehouse."

Soon, McMurtry and his young family would move to Houston, where they would live for six years,

McMurtry, continued

Archer City has a population under 2,000. The central city is a crossroads with a few businesses, administrative buildings, and churches. Larry McMurtry's bookstore Booked Up is the first brick building on the right. Note the big sky.

while McMurtry wrote and managed the Bookman, a rare-book store. In 1969, McMurtry had once again had his fill of Texas. With his divorce from Jo, in 1966, he was now single, and looking for... more.

McMurtry moved to Washington, D.C., where he was surrounded by Mercedes and Volvos instead of Oldsmobiles, as he described it. He opened the bookstore Booked Up, which would be a literary landmark for years.

McMurtry, as quoted on the Booked Up website, describes the next chapter in his bibliophilic story:

Booked Up began its life in March 1971 on a corner in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. We operated there for 22 years, selling a general mix of fine and scholarly books. We opened additional stores in Houston, Dallas, and Tucson, Arizona. Rising rents in D.C. and the surrounding areas eventually drove us away, and we took wing to Texas, where we consolidated all four stores in our main building in Archer City. Few books are rare; we have handled only a handful in 44 years in the trade. But many books are attractive. Customers come to us from wherever the four winds blow.

Return to Archer City

Early in his career, McMurtry had said that if he ever returned to Archer City, he would bring with him every book he had ever met. In the late 1980s, he did return, and he brought a few more books than that.

Consolidating "all four stores" created a stock of over 450,000 books. McMurtry had purchased buildings in downtown Archer City, a small place by any measure, with the dream that it would be another Hay-on-Wye, the famous town of bookshops in Wales. Archer City is in the middle of northwest Texas's ranching country, but it also within in a two- or three-hour drive of Dallas–Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Amarillo, and Lubbock, and about four hours from Austin. It would be a worthy and easy-to-reach destination for a bibliophile in any one of those cities.

McMurtry's father had clung to ranching when oil was killing the ranching business. In the early 2000s, McMurtry, who had once described his bookselling as herding books and his writing as herding words, began to see the reflection of his father: he was clinging to bookselling in a digital era that was killing the book business. He grieved over the loss of great bookstores such as the Gotham

McMurtry, continued

Book Mart in New York that closed in 2007 after 87 years in operation. McMurtry bought the signs of some of these bookstores and displayed them in Booked Up.

For McMurtry this meant that the vast stock that he had assembled and considered a great legacy for his family and hometown might actually be a great burden. In 2012, McMurtry held an auction.

In August 2012, Addison & Sarova Auctioneers sold almost 300,000 of McMurtry's stock, a shelf at a time.

Despite the changes in authoring, publishing, bookselling, and auctions, McMurtry is not a friend of new technology – he has always written on a Hermes typewriter. Clinging to his traditional craft, McMurtry told a reporter for *The Atlantic*, “Maybe Amazon is just a bubble.”

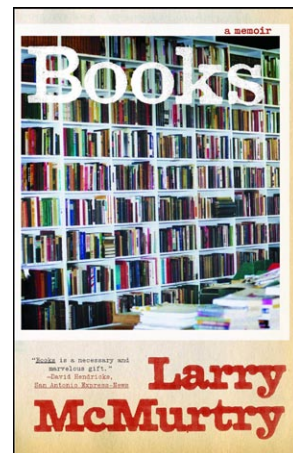
Similarly, he required that auction be held on-site and in person. Buyers gathered in Archer City for the August 10–11 event.

About 100 buyers from across the country attended. Some represented large operations like Powell's that purchases more than 150,000 books

a month, and others were individual collectors interested in this bookseller's Woodstock. The night before the auction, the local theatre screened *The Last Picture Show* – the auction was titled “The Last Book Auction” in its honor.

The value of the books was not the focus either for McMurtry or the buyers. McMurtry had the habit of mixing the rare with the common, so purchasers interested in one particular volume on a shelf would nonetheless have to buy the entire shelf. For McMurtry, this was a way to send all these books back out to the trade.

After the auction, McMurtry's business was still left with 150,000 books – not including his private collection of around 30,000 books, shelved in his home and in two additional houses.



Books was Larry McMurtry's second memoir. In 109 chapters, many a page or less, McMurtry revisits the people and books that he encountered in his long career as bookseller. McMurtry reflects on the fascination with books that makes a bibliophile tick and demonstrates his passion for, and belief in, books.



Among buyers from far and wide, Larry McMurtry arrives at The Last Book Auction in 2012.

Locked Letters: Old Technology Yields to New Technology

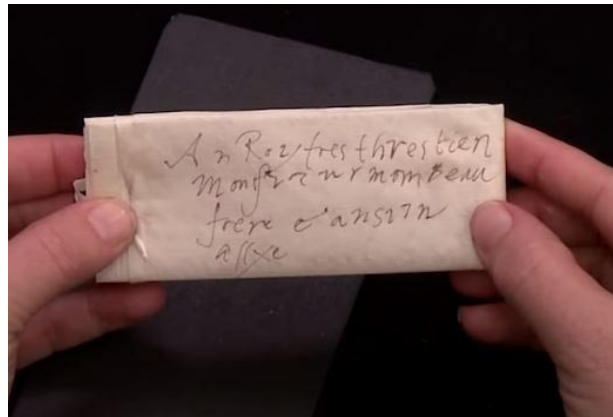
At 2:00 a.m. on the morning of February 8, 1587, Mary Queen of Scots completed a letter to her brother-in-law, King Henri III of France. Six hours later, she would be executed. To assure the secrecy of the letter, Mary cut, pierced, and folded it in such a way that the single sheet of paper upon which the letter was written created a “tamper-evident self-locking system.”

Mary’s ingenuity was not isolated, but a common craft practiced through the ages — John Donne, Marie Antoinette, Galileo, and Machiavelli are among many known to have used this technique to prevent prying eyes from reading their correspondences.

Abigail Cain writes in [Atlas Obscura](#):

The practice of letterlocking in the Western world is roughly bookended by the spread of flexible, foldable paper in the 13th century and the invention of the mass-produced envelope in the 19th century. But it also fits into a 10,000-year history of document security — one that begins with clay tablets in Mesopotamia and extends all the way to today’s passwords and two-step authentication.

This craft is now called letterlocking, a term coined by Jana Dambrogio, a conservator at MIT Libraries, where letterlocking is a particular interest. In fact,



The folding of this replica of the 1587 letter of Mary Queen of Scots is demonstrated in a [YouTube video](#).

a team of MIT researchers has recently announced a combination of techniques that allow them to open these letters through virtual unfolding, without damaging the letter or disturbing its seals.

In 2012, Dambrogio learned of a 17th-century trunk of undelivered letters preserved in the postal museum at The Hague, the Netherlands. Known as the de Brienne Collection, named for Simon and Marie de Brienne, postmasters in The Hague 300 years ago, before the invention of the envelope. The trunk contained over 3,100 items, including 2,500 opened letters from all over Europe, and 600 unopened “letterpackets.”

The research team, led by Dambrogio, used XMT imaging, which is similar to the CT scan, but much more powerful. XMT uses X-rays that would be extremely dangerous for a living being, but which is needed for its precision in this delicate process. XMT can reveal the layers and folds of the sealed letterpacket and map the ink on its surface. Special computer software can use this information to virtually unfold the letter on a computer where it can be read.

Because the letterpacket is not destroyed, the process also reveals valuable details about the letter-folding techniques. Using the technique on many letters that were written over many decades has revealed the evolution of the techniques from purely physical operations like cutting, folding, and piercing as described for the Mary Queen of Scots letter toward



The de Brienne Collection of locked letters from the 17th century was donated to the Dutch postal museum in its original period chest.

Sources: Science; NPR; Nature; [arstechnica.com](#)

Locked Letters, continued

These images show stages in the virtual unfolding of a letter from July 31, 1697, in the de Brienne Collection (DB-1627). The letter is from Jacques Sennacques to his cousin Pierre Le Pers, a French merchant in The Hague, requesting a certified copy of the death notice for Daniel Le Pers. It reads in part:

It has been a few weeks since I wrote to you in order to ask you to have drawn up for me a legalized excerpt of the death of sieur Daniel Le Pers, which took place in The Hague in the month of December 7 1695, without hearing from you. This is {...} I am writing to you a second time in order to remind you of the pains that I took on your behalf. It is important to me to have this extract you will do me a great pleasure to procure it for me to send me at the same time news of your health of all the family.

systems that employed adhesives as well, showing the tendency toward the modern system of one sheet of paper upon which the letter is written and another folded and sealable piece of paper that protects the letter – the envelope.

On Dambrogio's entertaining and informative website [Letterlocking: A Global Technology of Communication Security](#), readers will find the results of the analysis of thousands of locked letters that has led to an extensive categorization of letterlocking techniques, cleverly summarized in a Periodic Table of Letterlocking Categories. The various folds are even ranked for the level of security they provide.

The Letterlocking website gives many examples and tutorials. These begin with clay bulla used 10,000 years ago in ancient Mesopotamia – the bulla is basically a clay envelope for a letter written on clay. The example continues with the scroll, the three-

sided fold, several four-sided folds, and so on.

A wide range of resources supports the student of these letters in every aspect, including an extensive online Dictionary of Letterlocking (DoLL). One intriguing resource is the Early Modern Letters Online website: a “growing union catalogue of correspondence from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.” The database contains many thousands of letters, and digital tools are applied to study and connect them.

Full citation for Dambrogio et al.'s paper:

Unlocking history through automated virtual unfolding of sealed documents imaged by X-ray microtomography. Jana Dambrogio, Amanda Ghassaei, Daniel Starza Smith, Holly Jackson, Martin L. Demaine, Graham Davis, David Mills, Rebekah Ahrendt, Nadine Akkerman, David van der Linden & Erik D. Demaine. *Nature Communications* volume 12, Article number: 1184 (2021).



April Inventory

by W. D. Snodgrass, 1926–2009

The green catalpa tree has turned
All white; the cherry blooms once more.
In one whole year I haven't learned
A blessed thing they pay you for.
The blossoms snow down in my hair;
The trees and I will soon be bare.

The trees have more than I to spare.
The sleek, expensive girls I teach,
Younger and pinker every year,
Bloom gradually out of reach.
The pear tree lets its petals drop
Like dandruff on a tabletop.

The girls have grown so young by now
I have to nudge myself to stare.
This year they smile and mind me how
My teeth are falling with my hair.
In thirty years I may not get
Younger, shrewder, or out of debt.

The tenth time, just a year ago,
I made myself a little list
Of all the things I'd ought to know,
Then told my parents, analyst,
And everyone who's trusted me
I'd be substantial, presently.

I haven't read one book about
A book or memorized one plot.
Or found a mind I did not doubt.
I learned one date. And then forgot.
And one by one the solid scholars
Get the degrees, the jobs, the dollars.

And smile above their starchy collars.
I taught my classes Whitehead's notions;
One lovely girl, a song of Mahler's.
Lacking a source-book or promotions,
I showed one child the colors of
A luna moth and how to love.

I taught myself to name my name,
To bark back, loosen love and crying;
To ease my woman so she came,
To ease an old man who was dying.
I have not learned how often I
Can win, can love, but choose to die.

I have not learned there is a lie
Love shall be blonder, slimmer, younger;
That my equivocating eye
Loves only by my body's hunger;
That I have forces true to feel,
Or that the lovely world is real.

While scholars speak authority
And wear their ulcers on their sleeves,
My eyes in spectacles shall see
These trees procure and spend their leaves.
There is a value underneath
The gold and silver in my teeth.

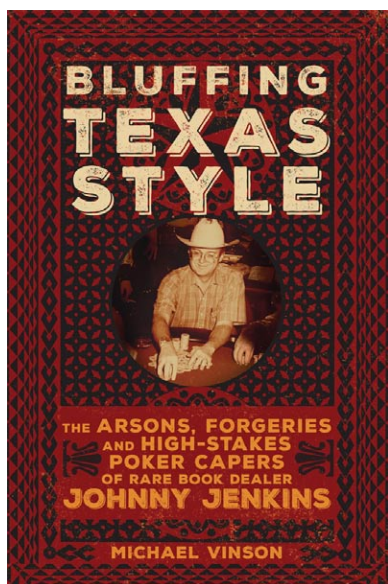
Though trees turn bare and girls turn wives,
We shall afford our costly seasons;
There is a gentleness survives
That will outspoke and has its reasons.
There is a loveliness exists,
Preserves us, not for specialists.

Books in Brief

Bluffing Texas Style: The Arsons, Forgeries, and High-Stakes Poker Capers of Rare Book Dealer Johnny Jenkins

Michael Vinson

University of Oklahoma Press, 250 pp., March 2020



In 1989, a woman fishing in Texas on a quiet stretch of the Colorado River snagged a body. Her “catch” was the corpse of rare book dealer Johnny Jenkins, shot in the head. His death was as dramatic as his life, which read, as the *Austin American-Statesman* declared, “like a bestseller.”

In 1975, Jenkins had staged the largest rare book coup of the 20th

century – the purchase, for more than two million dollars, of the legendary Eberstadt inventory of rare Americana, a feat noted in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. His undercover work for the FBI, recovering rare books stolen by Mafia figures, had also earned headlines coast to coast, as had his exploits playing high stakes poker in Las Vegas. But beneath such public triumphs lay darker secrets.

At the time of his death, Jenkins was about to be indicted by the ATF for arson and forging historical documents. There were rumors of million-dollar gambling debts at mob-connected casinos and irate Mafiosi he’d fingered and Texas collectors he’d cheated. Was he murdered? Or had he staged his suicide to look like murder?



Michael Vinson is a rare book dealer specializing in Texas and the West. He has appeared on the Antiques Road Show and in the *New York Times*. He is the author of *Edward Eberstadt & Sons: Rare Booksellers of Western Americana*.

Sources: Univ. of Oklahoma Press; Amazon

Taming the Tongue in the Heyday of English Grammar (1711–1851)

Bryan A. Garner

Grolier Club

301 pp., January 2021

Bryan A. Garner’s *Taming the Tongue in the Heyday of English Grammar (1711–1851)* is the companion to the Grolier Club exhibition of the same title (March 3 to May 15, 2021). Featuring 100 items, Garner’s book makes the primers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries come alive in ways their concerned and idiosyncratic authors might not have envisioned.

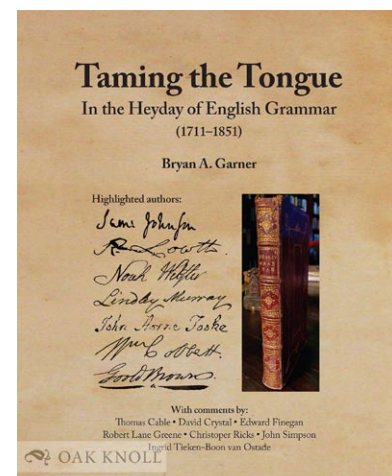
The book starts in 1711 with a call from Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison for “the creation of an English Academy to declare what is good English.” The academy was never formed, but a remarkable period in the history of the English language was started. Over the next 150 years, grammars would become bestsellers second in sales only to the Bible.

Garner shows that the grammarians of the period were a contentious and opinionated lot. *Taming the Tongue* is packed with information on the content and publication details of the grammars, as well as tantalizing anecdotes from the authors’ lives. Commentaries by Thomas Cable, David Crystal, Edward Finegan, Lane Greene, and Christopher Ricks and three appendices round out this lively book, which will appeal to scholars and aficionados alike.

[Garner’s presentation on YouTube](#)

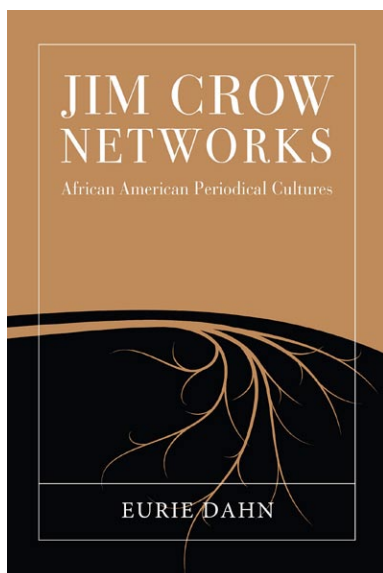
Bryan A. Garner is an American lawyer, grammarian, and lexicographer. He is the author of over 25 books, including *Garner’s Modern English Usage* (4th ed.).

Sources: Oak Knoll Books; Grolier Club



*Books in Brief, concluded***Jim Crow Networks: African American Periodical Cultures**

Eurie Dahn
University of Massachusetts Press
208 pp., January 2021



Scholars have paid relatively little attention to the highbrow, middlebrow, and popular periodicals that African Americans read and discussed regularly during the Jim Crow era — publications such as the *Chicago Defender*, *Crisis*, *Ebony*, and *Half-Century Magazine*. *Jim Crow Networks* considers how these magazines and

newspapers, and their authors, readers, advertisers, and editors worked as part of larger networks of activists and thinkers to advance racial uplift and resist racism during the first half of the 20th century.

As Eurie Dahn demonstrates, authors like James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, William Faulkner, and Jean Toomer wrote in the context of interracial and black periodical networks, which shaped the literature they produced and their concerns about racial violence. This original study also explores the overlooked intersections between the black press and modernist and Harlem Renaissance texts, and highlights key sites where readers and writers worked toward bottom-up sociopolitical changes during a period of legalized segregation.

Dr. Eurie Dahn is an assistant professor of English at The College of Saint Rose where she teaches courses on the intersection of modernist literature and African-American literature.

The Madman's Library: The Strangest Books, Manuscripts, and Other Literary Curiosities of History

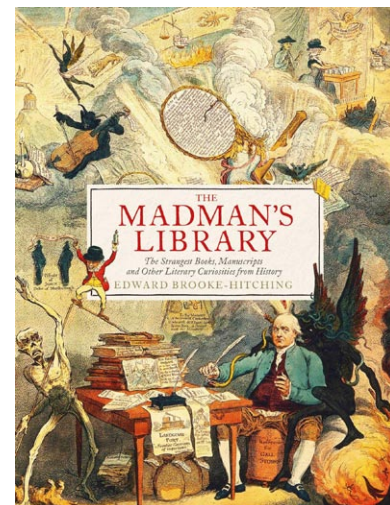
Edward Brooke-Hitching
Simon & Schuster
256 pp., October 2020

“Anybody who loves the printed word will be bowled over by this amusing, erudite, beautiful book about books. It is in every way a triumph. One of the loveliest books to have been published for many, many years” — Alexander McCall Smith

From the author of the critically acclaimed and globally successful *The Phantom Atlas*, *The Golden Atlas*, and *The Sky Atlas* comes a stunning new work. *The Madman's Library* is a unique, beautifully illustrated journey through the entire history of literature, delving into its darkest territories to hunt down the very strangest books ever written, and uncover the fascinating stories behind their creation.

This is a madman's library of eccentric and extraordinary volumes from around the world, many of which have been completely forgotten. Books written in blood and books that kill, books of the insane and books that hoaxed the globe, books invisible to the naked eye and books so long they could destroy the universe, books worn into battle, books of code and cypher whose secrets remain undiscovered . . . and a few others that are just plain weird.

Edward Brooke-Hitching is a writer for the popular BBC TV show *QI*. He is the author of award-winning nonfiction books and documentaries, including *The Madman's Library*.





Bibliothèque du Sénat, Paris, by Franck Bohbot, "[House of Books](#)"



This Month's Writers and Contributors

Many thanks to those who contributed words, pictures, and ideas to this month's newsletter!

David Hall
Jerry Morris
Linda Morris
Maureen E. Mulvihill
Carl Mario Nudi
Gary Simons
Ben Wiley

Have an idea for an article for *The Florida Bibliophile*? Contact Charles Brown, cbrown@atlantic.net, to submit or for assistance in preparing your article.

Join FBS!

If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group. You will find contact emails on the last page of this newsletter.

Membership is \$50 per year. You can find a membership form on our website. It will give you the address to which to send your filled-out form and payment.

Joining FBS also makes you a member of our national organization, the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies.



Write for Your Newsletter!



Your input and content are needed. FBS is about participation, about discoveries, about passionate interests, and sometimes the deliciously obscure. Why not write about it!?

Upcoming Events

April 2021



Lola Haskins, Poet

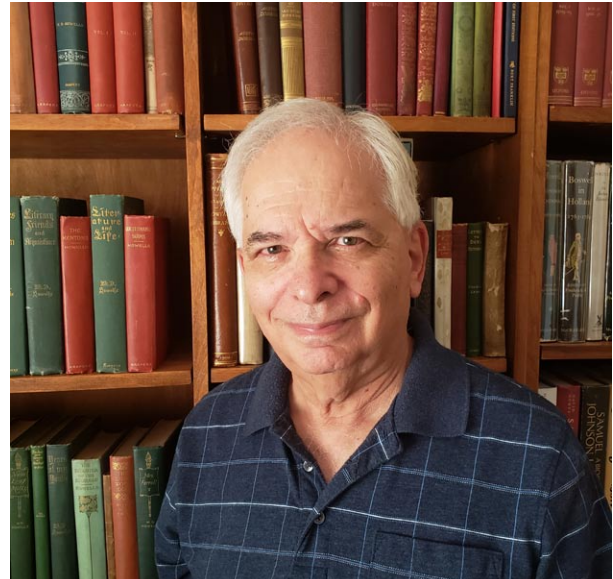
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

April 18, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

Returning to FBS for National Poetry Month is award-winning Florida poet Lola Haskins, featuring poems from several of her books.

When the pandemic cancelled last April's meeting and Lola's reading, poems from her most recent book of poems *Asylum: Improvisations on John Clare*, published in the prestigious University of Pittsburgh Poetry Series, were featured in the FNS newsletter for May. We invited Lola back for this year's National Poetry Month, and she plans to read from several of her collections, many of which will be new and surprising. Join us for this inspiring afternoon of poetic art

May 2021



Gary Simons: The Publications of American General Interest Book Clubs

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 16, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

FBS Secretary Gary Simons is creating a bibliography of the publications of American book clubs, covering not only the large brand-name book clubs (Grolier, Caxton, Rowfant, Book Club of California, Zamorano, etc.) but also lots of smaller clubs, most of which are currently active but some of which are now defunct. Gary will also talk about the process of identifying publications and review categories of publications with examples of each.

Gary is a specialist in Victorian literature and, until 2020, he was editor of the Curran Index, a database of over 170,000 articles and poems from Victorian periodicals.

Book Events, Podcasts, and More

Know of any events of interest to book lovers? Send corrections and additions to Charles Brown, cmbrown@atlantic.net.

Florida Book Events – April 2021

April 25, 10 AM–4 PM

Tampa-Hillsborough Storytelling Festival

Tampa (est. 1980) (tampastory.org/)

April 22, 6 PM–9 PM

Oxford Exchange Book Fair

420 West Kennedy Blvd.

Tampa (est. 2015)

April 24

Independent Bookstore Day

Mask up, and shop Your Local Bookstore!

Behind the Bookshelves, the AbeBooks Podcast

[Behind the Bookshelves](#) offers interviews with authors, collectors, and booksellers covering a wide range of topics. Recent episodes include:

Feb. 26 – *New Zealand's Book Van*: Booksellers Annie Buscemi and Natasya Zambri have gone mobile. In Queenstown, New Zealand, they have a Nissan van full of books and tales to tell.

Mar. 8 – *Books of Hours Explained*: Sandra Hindman runs *Les Enluminures*, selling Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts and miniatures. Sandra explains the content, decoration, and purpose of the books of hours as well as who owned them.

Mar. 10 – *Rare Islamic Books*: From the Quran to an early pioneer of fiction, we learn about rare Islamic books in the company of Roxana Kashani, recently hired to lead a new Islamic department at Shapero Rare Books in London.

Mar. 15 – *Women of Pan Am*: Julia Cooke's *Come Fly the World* looks at the young women who became stewardesses with Pan Am in the 1960s and 1970s. From women's rights to the Vietnam War, Julia explores the role played by these women.

Mar. 22 – *Book Historia*: Allie Alvis creates brief YouTube videos to explain rare book terminology. She shares her love of rare books and how Led Zeppelin and Monty Python can help us understand book collecting terms.

Rare Book Cafe, with Steven and Edie Eisenstein

Florida book dealers and FBS members Steve and Edie Eisenstein started "Rare Book Cafe" several years ago to cover all aspects of books in "the only live-streamed program about antiquarian books, ephemera, and more...." View episodes on the [Rare Book Cafe website \(on Facebook\)](#), on YouTube, and in audio, *Rare Book Cafe Raw*, on podcast sites.

On March 25 (S6 E9) – Host Ed Markiwicz (and "Woody") opens the show with Lee Linn, and Andrew Stauffer. 10:00 – David Hess things found in old books. 19:20 – Andrew Stauffer introduces his recent book *Book Traces* (Univ. of Penn.) on marginalia and ephemera found in pre-1923 library books. 21:00 – Sherif Afifi on repairing paper tears. 32:30 – Lin Thomas on illustrator Ralph Caldecott. 38:40 – Mary Kay Watson with comments on the Caldecott Medal. 41:40 – Andrew Stauffer discuss *Book Traces*. 65:10 Lee and Ed discuss the Virtual Ephemera Fair. 59:30 – A tribute to Beverly Cleary.

The BiblioFile, with Nigel Beale

[THE BIBLIOFILE](#) is one of the world's leading podcasts about "the book" and book culture. Host Nigel Beale fosters wide-ranging conversations with authors, poets, publishers, booksellers, editors, collectors, book makers, scholars, critics, designers, publicists, literary agents, and others who just plain love books. The website provides podcasts back to 2006, lists of reading, links, etc.

Recent episodes:

Mar. 1 – Marc Côté on discovering and developing Canadian writing talent

Mar. 10 – Jason Rovito, a "new antiquarian," on growing the documentary value of collections

Mar. 14 – Will Schwalbe on the benefits of reading and talking about books

Mar. 19 – Richard Nash, strategist and entrepreneur, on the business of literature Pt. 2

Mar. 28 – The late novelist, screenwriter, and essayist Larry McMurtry on Book Ranching

*Book Events, Podcasts, and More, concluded***American Antiquarian Society
Virtual Book Talks**

Founded in 1812 by Isaiah Thomas, a Revolutionary War patriot and printer, the American Antiquarian Society is the oldest history society in the U.S. It limits its interests to the period before 1876 and holds the “largest and most accessible collection of books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers, periodicals, music, and graphic arts material” printed up to that date.

The AAS’s Program in the History of the Book in American Culture (PHBAC) was established in 1983, responding to and promoting the then emerging field of book history. PHBAC sponsors **Virtual Book Talk**, which showcases “authors of recently published scholarly monographs, digital-equivalents, and creative works broadly related to book history and print culture.” Virtual Book Talk is free, but advance registration is required. Past talks are archived on the PHBAC website.

From March:

Mar. 25, 2021, 2 p.m. – Lucas Dietrich.
Writing Across the Color Line: U.S. Print Culture and the Rise of Ethnic Literature, 1877–1920. Dietrich examines interactions between U.S. writers of color and the predominantly white publishing trade at the turn of the twentieth century. The book considers how a constellation of ethnic authors sought commercial publication as a means to influence a national audience.

Coming in April:

April 29, 2021, 2 p.m. – Koritha Mitchell.
From Slave Cabins to the White House: Homemade Citizenship in African American Culture. Koritha Mitchell analyzes canonical texts by and about African American women to lay bare the hostility these women face as they invest in traditional domesticity. Instead of the respectability and safety granted white homemakers, black women endure pejorative labels, racist governmental policies, attacks on their citizenship, and aggression meant to keep them in “their place.”

The Book Collector Podcast

In 1952, James Bond author Ian Fleming created *The Book Collector*, a “unique periodical for bibliophiles,” which has featured a wide range of articles pertaining to book collecting, modern first editions, typography, national libraries, and numerous other matters of interest to book collectors and enthusiasts. Fleming died in 1964, as did the journal’s editor John Hayward. After a brief hiatus, the journal started up again in the hands of its new owner and editor, Nicolas Barker. In 2016, Fleming’s nephews, James and Fergus Fleming, assumed leadership of the journal, and in 2020 they created a podcast, which features readings from the journal’s archives. There are now [36 podcasts](#), on SoundCloud.

University of Oxford Podcasts

Hundreds of podcasts are available in many series of interest to bibliophiles. Here are a few selections to get started:

[History of the Book](#) – Interactions between the history of the book and other areas of research.

[Fantasy Literature](#) – The roots of fantasy, the main writers and themes, and how to approach these texts.

Grolier Club of New York Videos

The Grolier Club of New York has posted over [240 videos on Vimeo](#), including many virtual exhibition openings and tours and many virtual show-and-tell episodes. Here is a sampling. All videos can be located on the Vimeo webpage listed above; the following links are direct to the listed video.

- [Virtual London Bibliophile Walking Tour](#)
- [Michael Witmore – The Lottery on Paper](#)
- [500 Years of Women’s Work](#)
- [Out of Line: The Unexpected Art of the Doodle](#)
- [A Year in the Basement with Walt Whitman](#)



Florida Bibliophile Society 2020–2021 Season



David Hall

Until further notice, all FBS meetings will be virtual via Zoom.

September 20 • FBS Members – Introduction to Zoom and Members' Show and Tell: Meeting attendees connected to our virtual meeting through Zoom. We learned about some helpful features of this software, shared about some special summer acquisitions, and had a generally good chat.

October 18 • Nigel Beale – How to Talk to a Bibliophile. Nigel hosts and produces *The BiblioFile* podcast. He has interviewed over 400 novelists, poets, publishers, and critics. Nigel shared about starting *The BiblioFile*, the many interviews he's conducted, and his own book interests. His presentation was followed by a lively Q&A with attendees.

November 15 • Mark Samuels Lasner – British Literature in the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection. Mark created an important collection of late 19th century British authors and donated the entire collection to the University of Delaware in 2016 – over 9,000 books, works of art, and ephemera. Mark talked about how he began collecting and the authors and important works in the collection.

December 20 • Happy Bibliophile Holiday Self-Gifting Party. A holiday party and gift exchange for the Covid era. Members were invited to buy themselves a special book and share it with the group. Delicious refreshments were self-served.

January 17 • Charles Brown – Henry Darger, Author and Artist. Charles presented the work of Henry Darger. When Darger died, writings and artworks amounting to thousands of pages were found in his small Chicago apartment, including Darger's

15,000-page novel, illustrated with watercolors, tracings, and collage.

February 21 • Rebecca Rego Barry – Carolyn Wells in the Library. Wells (1862–1942) wrote over 170 books, mostly mysteries. Rebecca discussed Wells's work and showed some of the books. Rebecca is author of *Rare Books Uncovered: True Stories of Fantastic Finds in Unlikely Places*. She is editor of *Fine Books & Collections*.

March 21 • Eric Steckler – The Jews in the American Civil War. Dr. Eric Steckler is a retired medical doctor and Jewish history scholar. Eric explained the fascinating role of Jews in the Civil War, their views on slavery and their divided loyalty between the Union and the Confederacy.

April 18 • Lola Haskins – A Reading of Selected Poems. Lola's presentations to FBS have been warmly received. She was scheduled to present from her newest collection *Asylum* in April 2020. The meeting was cancelled, but poems from *Asylum* appeared in *The Florida Bibliophile*. We immediately invited her back for Poetry Month 2021.

April 23–26 • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair. The 2021 Florida Antiquarian Book Fair has been cancelled, but planning is underway for 2022. More time to save pennies!

May 16 • Gary Simons – The Publications of American General Interest Book Clubs. Gary will discuss the range of publications created by American's many book clubs, from the large and long established to smaller and newer clubs.

All meetings are held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday afternoons unless otherwise announced.



Endpaper • Connections



Lambeth Palace Library... Shakespeare's birthday... the locked letters of John Donne and Mary Queen of Scots... It might seem that this issue of the newsletter is a little heavy with Early Modern England.

Honestly, it just happened like that, but that period in English history and literature is a truly amazing one. I would like to reserve one of my future lives for Shakespeare scholarship.

Their time has a fascinating connection to ours: they were in the full flush of an information revolution.

A new technology had unleashed new forms of communication among scientists, authors, engineers, politicians, doctors. ... And in turn, the power of transmitting information over distances and generations was unleashing yet other revolutions in the arts and sciences and affairs of nations of which we are the beneficiaries.

These same words could describe the information revolution we are living through right now as

computers make it possible, for example, to visit the great libraries of the world, call up the rarest books, and turn their pages with a finger swipe or a mouse click.

This amazing ability is only the tip of the iceberg, as the letterlocking discoveries reported by MIT scientists show. Computers applied to the arts – digital humanities – can reveal what has never been seen before and can catalog and find connections, even the most tenuous ones, in collections of thousands, if not millions of documents.

We see this power everyday when we look up the weather on the Internet. We do not see the incredible interconnected and complex networks that respond to our inquiry; we see that Saturday is likely to be rainy... and a good day to get comfortable with a good book.

See you at the bookstore... and online!

— Charles

The Florida Bibliophile Society

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