

# The Florida Bibliophile

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*Deadline for the February newsletter is January 31, 2022.  
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 2021 FABS Journal [here](#).

**Happy New Year!**  
from the  
**Florida Bibliophile Society**



**Florida Bibliophile Society**  
A community of book lovers

# The Florida Bibliophile Society

## 2021 Holiday Party

### **Fun people make for fun times! And a fun time was had at the FBS 2021 Holiday Party!**

First, our thanks to FBS members Joyce and Ben Wiley for hosting our party in their lovely home – so comfortable and accommodating, elegantly decorated for the season, and beautifully set up for guests.

As we arrived, we were greeted with a sparkling cocktail with which to salute each other. The conversation was equally sparkling for our first in-person holiday party in two years.

When dinner was ready, we helped ourselves to the delicious food and took a place at the tables set up in the Wileys' living room and Florida room. After lunch, we enjoyed coffee and dessert.

After an appropriate interval, we pulled the Christmas crackers, donned the paper crowns, tried out the toys, and laughed – or grimaced – as befitted the seasonal jokes.

Then it was time for our gift exchange. Everyone had brought a gift-wrapped book and set them in an enticing pile. We drew lots to determine the order we would go in. Each book, as it was unwrapped, sparked a conversation. And when all the books were given out, the negotiations began as people traded for books they were more interested in.

After photos and more conversation, we began to take our leave, thanking our hosts for their hospitality, wishing each other happy holidays, and looking forward to our personal holiday celebrations during the coming days and the first day of the new year.





*Minutes, continued*



*On the thirty-eighth day of Christmas...*



*Above: Charles Brown is ready with the Christmas crackers.*



*Above right: Roberta and Ed Cifelli*



*Below right: Carl Nudi and Jude Bagatti*



*Minutes, continued*



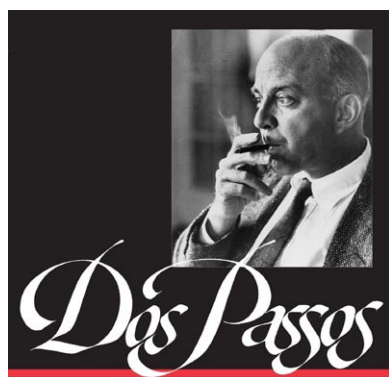
*The assembled company gathers around the gifts. Left to right: Roberta Cifelli, Ed Cifelli (seated), Ben Wiley (standing), Jude Bagatti, Charles Brown, Linda Morris, Jerry Morris, Irene Pavese (standing), and Carl Nudi (seated). Photographer: Joyce Wiley.*



*The assembled company after the gift exchange. The books they hold are not necessarily the ones they went home with.*

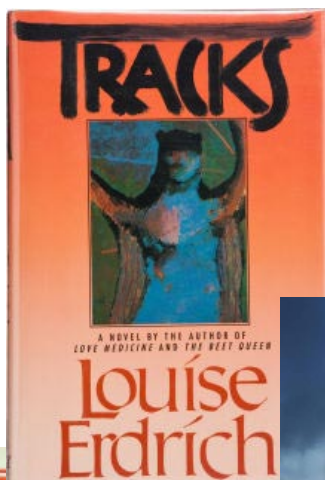


Minutes, continued



U.S.A.  
The 42nd Parallel  
1919  
The Big Money

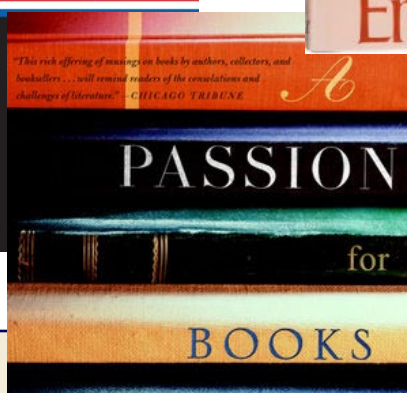
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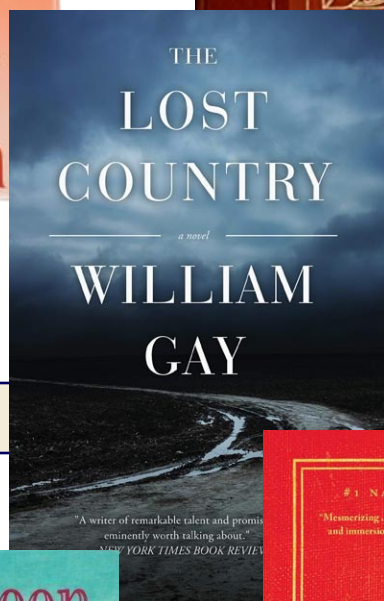
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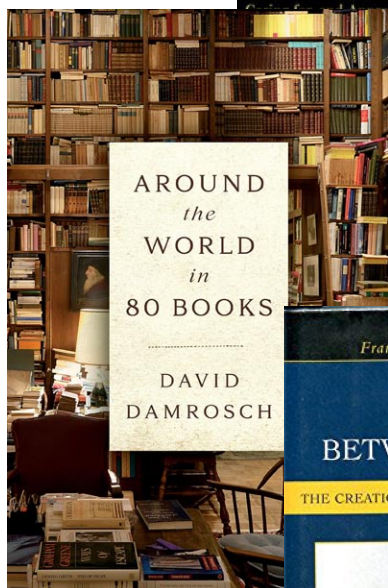
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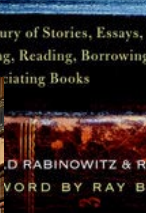
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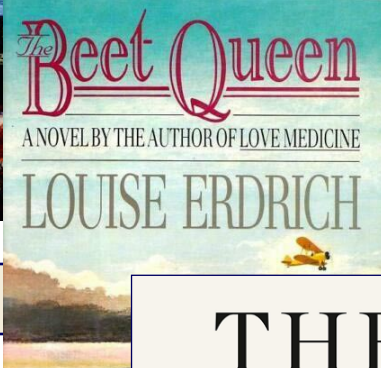
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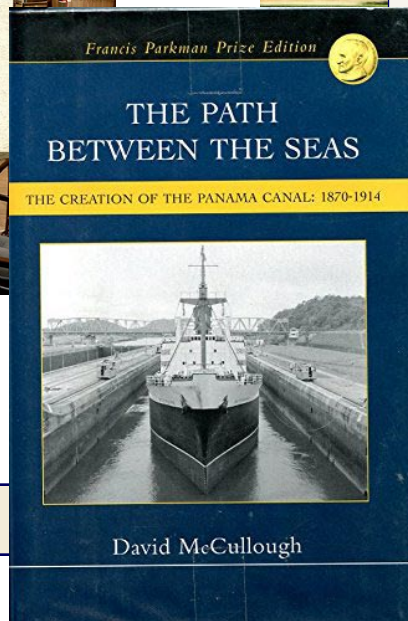
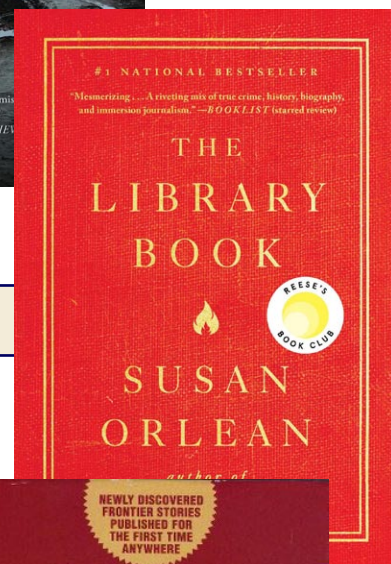
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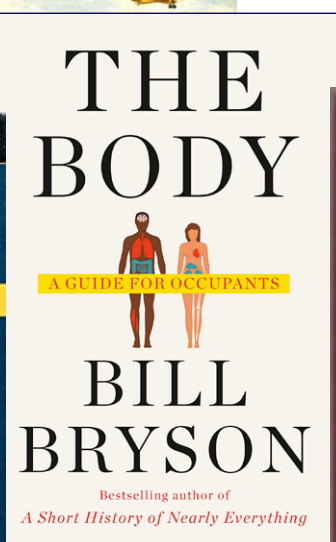
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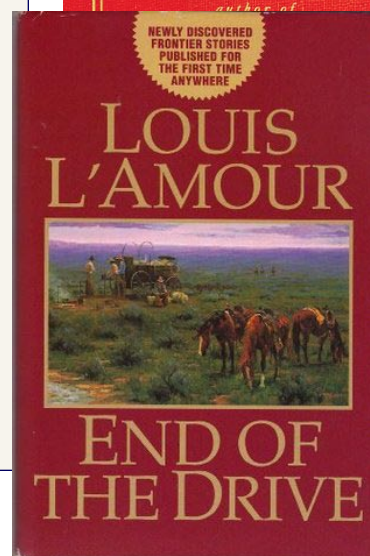
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See key on next page.



*Minutes, continued*

## The Books and Some Book Chat

1. *The U.S.A. Trilogy* by John Dos Passos
2. *Tracks* by Louise Erdrich
3. *Ulysses* by James Joyce (Franklin Library Edition)
4. *A Passion for Books: A Book Lover's Treasury*, edited by Rabinowitz and Kaplan
5. *The Lost Country* by William Gay
6. *Around the World in 80 Books* by David Damrosch
7. *The Beet Queen* by Louise Erdrich
8. *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean
9. *The Path between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870–1914* by David McCullough
10. *The Body* by Bill Bryson
11. *End of the Drive* by Louis L'Amour

**From: Ben Wiley**  
Dec. 29, 8:49 a.m.

Hi all! Just a brief follow-up to our holiday book exchange, always a fun, anticipatory part of our getting together. Seems that never gets old.



Wanted to let you know I did finish the Louis L'Amour *END OF THE DRIVE* that Jerry donated, and got my library copy of L'Amour's memoir *EDUCATION OF A WANDERING MAN* that you had recommended. That's up next for me. Thank you, Jerry, for both the book and the memoir recommendation. My first Louis L'Amour book!! Lots of horses, deserts, canyons, cattle rustling, rough men, tough men, but our hero is a reader who likes Hawthorne and Whitman! Of course, he does. *END OF THE DRIVE* was the book that Joyce drew from the exchange.

Now, I've also finished the other book, *THE LOST COUNTRY* by William Gay. That's the one I drew in the book exchange, an intriguing Southern

Gothic novel filled with grotesques, trailer trash, honky-tonks, tent revivals, bootlegging, hitchhiking, jailed drunks, corrupt local police – like a blend of Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. Favorite sentences include: "Her swimsuit was as brief as a heretic's prayer." And "He's so dumb he would solve his constipation by sitting on a block of cheese and swallowing a live rat to work his way down." OK!!

But I cannot recall who donated that book. Do you remember who put that novel in the mix? I'm curious to know. It looks like a brand-new hardback book, dust jacket, 2018 1st edition, and a writer I never heard of. Great foreword and afterword about William Gay's lifetime accumulation of notebooks and drafts, yet he died without publishing the book, so family and editors had to recreate it from musty notes and drafts discovered in the family attic. Apparently William Gay was a drywaller by day and a writer by night! Reminiscent of Toole's *CONFEDERACY OF DUNCES* and its posthumous publication.

So I'm curious as to who donated this book to the mix. And how you came across the book. In other words, what's the provenance???

Anybody else have follow-up requests about books given and received?

Joyce gave Bill Bryson's *THE BODY*. We both read it and enjoyed its sprightly, irreverent take on our mortal coil. I can't remember who ended up with that as I think it got swapped around. Interestingly, I began reading it by dipping down into various systems of which I am most familiar (cardiological, urological, dermatological) but then began to read it systematically (literally, system to system—gut, lungs, immune, sleep, balance, nerves, pain, conception, birth, skeletal, etc.), back of the book to the front (!!!). Loved the way he often said "we don't know," "we're not sure," "we're still trying to determine." I especially enjoyed the references to specific names, researchers, scientists, discoverers, Nobel Prizes, body parts and diseases named for people. And he puts to rest once and for all such hoary myths as your hair growing after you're dead (sounds like something from a Southern Gothic novel!).



**Minutes, concluded**

I donated A PASSION FOR BOOKS, A BOOK LOVER'S TREASURY, essays edited by Rabinowitz and Kaplan. I have a hardback, dust jacketed 1999 1st Edition of this, so generously gave away my paperback copy. I think Ed drew this and immediately discovered Philip Roth's essay on the Newark Public Library, apparently a destination much beloved by Ed! The epigraph reads, "Without books, God is silent, justice dormant, natural science at a stand, philosophy lame, letters dumb, and all things involved in darkness."

Here's to a Happy New Year 2022 for us all with old and new books to be discovered, relished, shared—may 'God' talk, justice be neither delayed nor denied, sciences advanced based on truth and not politics, philosophy strong and vigorous, letters zestful and sprightly, and all things transparent and in the light.

Ben

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**From: Ed Cifelli**  
**Dec. 29, 10:12 a.m.**

Thanks for your book reviews, energetic and insightful as usual. Glad you liked the Bryson, always one of my favorites. Haven't gotten to your PASSION book yet beyond a quick perusal. Looking forward. (Am finishing up Barbara Tuchman's classic WW I study, THE GUNS OF AUGUST with Matthew Sturgis's brand-new OSCAR WILDE waiting in the wings.)

Now that you've sampled Louis L'Amour, try Zane Grey's RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE. Wonderful. He's got one old timer telling a long story which he stops in the middle of with this observation: "I been thinkin' a lot for a feller who don't know much." (That's true of a lot of writers who'd be better off silent.)

Say hey to the lovely Miss Joyce.

Edward

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**From: Jude Bagatti**  
**Dec. 29, 5:52 p.m.**

Hey Ben, et al.:

Mea culpa! I am the unlikely one who threw THE LOST COUNTRY by William Gay into the book exchange. I had just finished reading it and, as you say, it is a raucous read of unruly characters set mostly in Tennessee. I particularly noted the serious disabling features some characters endured. Roosterfish (the name's crude, profane origin is explained) was an arm amputee and a con man who restored barn roofs with fake paint. He always had a sure-thing, money-making scheme, like winning a fortune in bets with his prize cockfighter, none of which ever panned out. Tyler was a greedy hunchback dwarf. Others were unstable emotionally or mentally, if not physically. Billy Edgewater, said to be Gay's most autobiographical character, was a guilt-ridden, indecisive dreamer, easily persuaded and distracted from vague goals.

I wondered who would pick the book in the exchange. Lucky you! Ha! As for provenance, this too, is unlikely. I had attended Gulfport's Police Night Out event, as a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) volunteer. One of the booths had a wheel to spin to win mostly useless items. I spun; the marker landed on "book." THE LOST COUNTRY is the book I won. I don't know where/how they got them, but the booth held a small stack of that title. So there you have it. A series of chance incidents brought you that Southern Gothic adventure.

Initially, I was happy to have chosen THE BODY, as I've loved Bryson's humor in his other books. But then I traded with Charles for the four Louise Erdrich books since I had never read anything of hers and my book club is scheduled to read one of her books. Haven't read any Erdrich yet but have just finished reading THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD, by Colson Whitehead.

Happy New Year Y'All!

Jude



## Celebrating 40 Years of the Price Library of Judaica

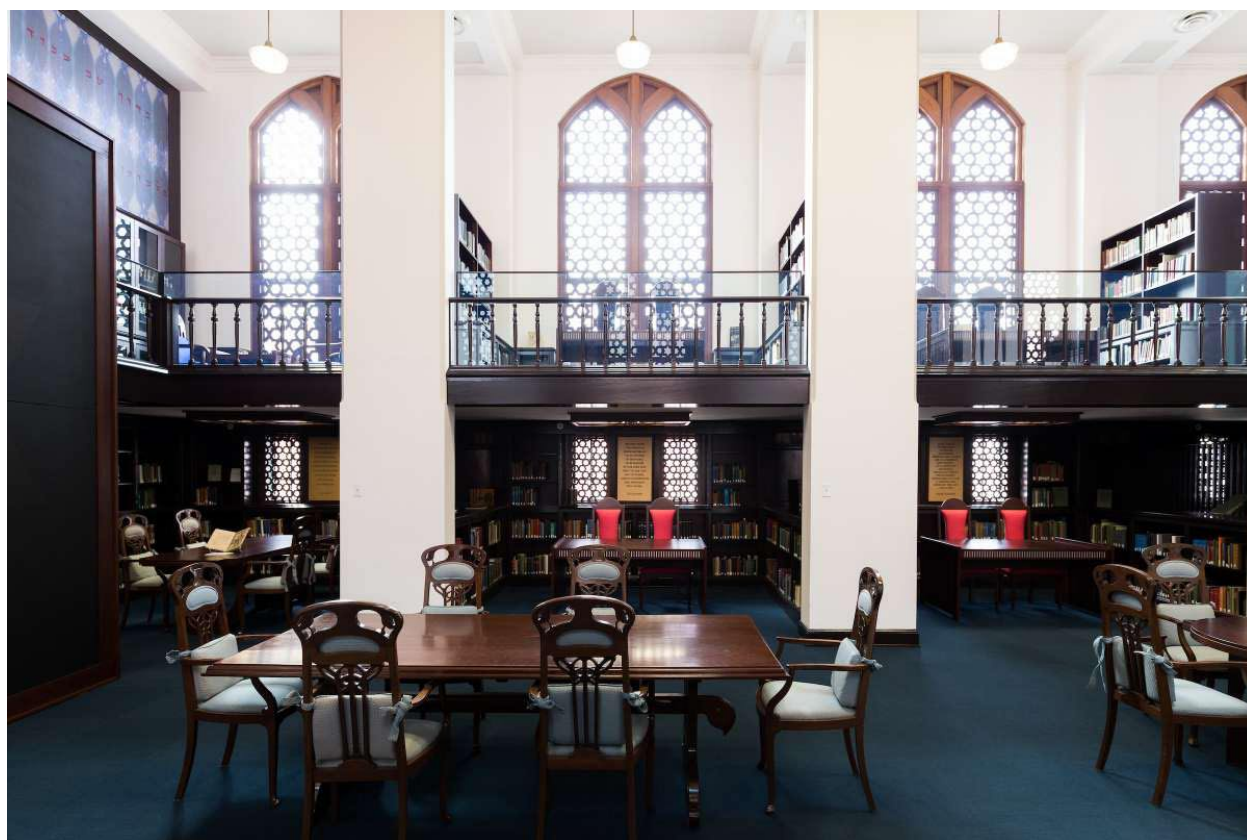
**T**he University of Florida's Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> year with an online exhibition of important holdings that illustrate the scope and significance of the collection.

**Forty years ago, in 1981, Samuel and Jack Price of Jacksonville, Florida, provided a major endowment to the University of Florida to support the management and growth of its collections of Judaica.** At the time, it was the largest single donation the University of Florida had ever received. In honor of this contribution, the library was named for Samuel and Jack's parents: The Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica. Isser and Rae were both instrumental in creating a Jewish Center in Jacksonville in the 1920s and had raised their family with a deep commitment to Jewish education and philanthropy.

In 1973, the University of Florida established a Jewish Studies Center and began assembling books to support the center. The collection that

would become the foundation of the Price Library was acquired in 1977 with the purchase of Rabbi Leonard C. Mishkin's personal collection of books, then the largest private library of Judaica in the United States. A professor of Jewish history at the Hebrew Theological College in Chicago, Mishkin had amassed over 30,000 volumes covering virtually every area of scholarship and in a wide variety of languages. The UF Libraries received one of the first National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grants to help fund the purchase of Mishkin's volumes.

In advance of the purchase, UF hired respected Judaica bibliographer Charles Berlin to evaluate Mishkin's collection. His report described the collection as "superb" and stated that the collection would "catapult" UF into the ranks of larger university Judaica collections. He noted the rarity of many of Mishkin's items. Mishkin had collected every *festschrift* (publications celebrating a specific event or individual) he could find,



*The main reading room of the Isser and Rae Price Library of Judaica after the 2014 renovation led by architect Kenneth Treister*



*40 Years, 40 Objects, continued*

*Jack, Rae, and Samuel Price (right to left), c. 1981*

including festschrifts published on Jewish Studies, booklets and pamphlets celebrating landmark events, Jewish institutions, and illustrious Jewish rabbis and leaders, and rare books and booklets commemorating lost Jewish communities or the anniversary of an individual's death. Among the rarest items were anniversary issues of a wide range of Jewish newspapers.

In 1978, a second collection was added to Mishkin's. The University of Florida (UF) purchased the books of Dr. Shlomo Marenof, a Russian Jewish emigré and lecturer in Hebrew and Near Eastern Civilization at Brandeis University. Marenof's personal library of more than 3,000 works included important titles in Hebrew, with concentrations in biblical studies, Midrash, and Modern Hebrew literature.

In 1979, UF hired Robert Singerman from the world-renowned Klau Library of the Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati campus). Singerman was already well established as a bibliographer in Jewish studies and soon acquired a third major collection for the growing Judaica library with the purchase of the collection of Bernard Morgenstern, owner of a secondhand bookstore on New York's Lower East Side. Morgenstern was eager to sell the store's entire inventory, which included around 10,000 imprints, mostly from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, including books, pamphlets, and other ephemera of which about 60 per cent was in Yiddish. Among

the precarious piles of materials in the bookstore, Singerman found many treasures, including editions of all the major Yiddish novelists, poets, and dramatists as well as many lesser-known authors and scarce titles.

The Mishkin-Marenof-Morgenstern collection, then over 50,000 items, was a significant resource and needed more support for development, preservation, and cataloging and to improve access for researchers. Thus, the gift of Samuel and Jack Price was timely and laid a foundation for what is today one of the larger collections of Judaica in the U.S. and the preeminent collection in the Southeast.

Even with the support of the Price endowment, acquisitions during the Singerman years exceeded staff capacity to fully catalogue and library capacity to shelve. Singerman retired in 2006, having helped grow the library from 24,000 items to over 85,000. In 2010, Rebecca Jefferson was hired as head of the Price Library. Jefferson sought to extend Singerman's goals of making the collection more accessible, and under her direction, UF won a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Challenge Grant. The grant was awarded in 2014 and was one of only 16 grants conferred that year at the highest amount, \$500,000. To win the grant, UF had to raise \$1.5 million and submit a 200+-page application explaining the value of the collection and how the grant funds would be used to increase the accessibility and usefulness of the collection.



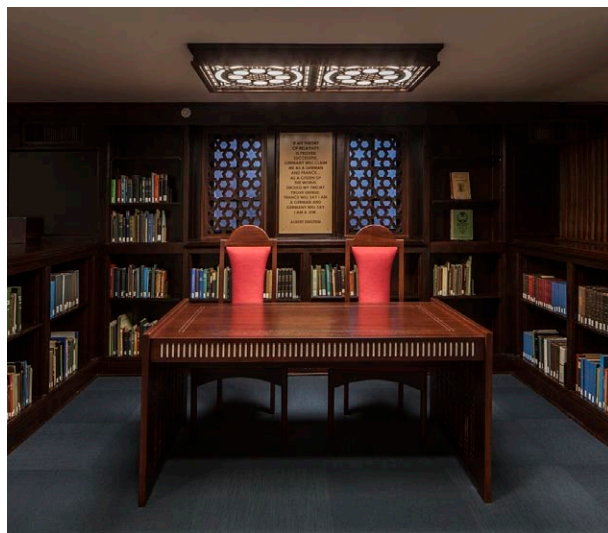
*Rebecca Jefferson, head of the Price Library of Judaica*

The Challenge Grant supports the continuing work of the Price Library "to lead a new national and international effort to map, study, and promote the diversity of histories and cultures in this hemisphere." Annual interest generated by the \$2 million endowment will be used in perpetuity

*40 Years, 40 Objects, continued*

to fund strategic activities that achieve two goals related to Florida, Latin America, and the Caribbean: (1) leading national and international efforts to inspire greater study of the Jewish diaspora and the ways in which minority groups and individuals contribute to the wider society and (2) providing broader access to underresearched and hidden historical materials to revolutionize current scholarship and promote greater knowledge and understanding.

The year 2014 also saw renovation of the library's facilities, bringing many works out of storage and placing them in the historic Library East building on the UF campus, in renovated spaces, including the Judaica Suite, a set of reading rooms created by architect and artist Kenneth Treister. The work of Treister, a UF alumnus, is known throughout the U.S., Israel, and the Caribbean. He is the sculptor and architect of Miami Beach's world-famous Holocaust Memorial. The suite also contains Treister's sculpture as well as his artwork, handmade furniture, and his collection of rare chess sets. The space is used for classes, tours, and other events, and often for quiet study. Niches in the suite are equipped with a table and two chairs, referencing the Jewish tradition of *chavrusa*, an Aramaic word meaning friendship or companionship, in which two students study and learn together.



*Study niche in the Judaica Suite of the Price Library*

Today, the Price Library is a vibrant collection of over 120,000 items documenting virtually every aspect of the Jewish experience, including 10,000 rare books and periodicals; forty archival and manuscript collections; works in forty-five languages representing over fifty countries, and over 19,000 digitized items online.

**In 2021, the library celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> year with an online exhibition called *40 Years, 40 Objects: The Price Library of Judaica*.** It displays items from the library's collection in five categories: Rarities; One of a Kind; Special and Unusual; Journeys through Time and Space; and Florida, Latin America, and the Caribbean. The library's website describes the categories:

The first category, "Rarities," includes printed books from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of which represent milestones in Jewish publishing history, as well as individual objects each with a unique provenance story. The "One of a Kind" section ranges from scrolls and manuscripts to unique works of art and sculpture by Jewish creators or with Jewish themes. In the "Special and Unusual Collections" category are materials such as a cookbook, a rare children's book, a musical score, and other distinctive items that capture moments of Jewish history in various unexpected ways. The objects in "Journeys Through Time and Space" each demonstrate the ways in which Jewish materials leave their footprint across various temporal and spatial dimensions both physically and symbolically. Finally, the objects in "Florida, Latin America, and the Caribbean" represent items recently acquired for the library through its NEH Challenge Grant or through digital partnership with other institutions and organizations. The section includes rare periodicals, maps, and ephemera, each testifying to various aspects of community life in these regions, as well as family papers from Floridian homes that provide important documentation of key historical events.



# 40 years 40 objects

## THE PRICE LIBRARY OF JUDAICA

On the following pages, we display items from the 40 Years, 40 Objects online exhibition – one item for each of the five categories of exhibition objects. Visit the 40 Years, 40 Objects website to view all the objects and to begin an exploration of the rich online content offered by the Price Library of Judaica.



### Rarity

Sebastian Münster (German, c. 1488–1552). *Kalendarium Hebraicum* [Hebrew Calendar]. 1527. Johan Froben, Basel. CE35.M7 1527.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Christian scholars became increasingly interested in studying Hebrew grammar and Jewish interpretation in order to clarify biblical texts in their original language. This *Kalendarium* is a product of that interest. An exposition of Jewish calendrical computations in Latin and Hebrew, it includes astronomical woodcuts and initials of various sizes, probably by Hans Holbein the Younger.

## 40 Years, 40 Objects, continued

## One of a Kind

**Albert Einstein (German, Swiss, American, 1879–1955). Autographed Scroll with drawing and poem. 1922. Japan.**

Gift of Janet K. Yamamoto.

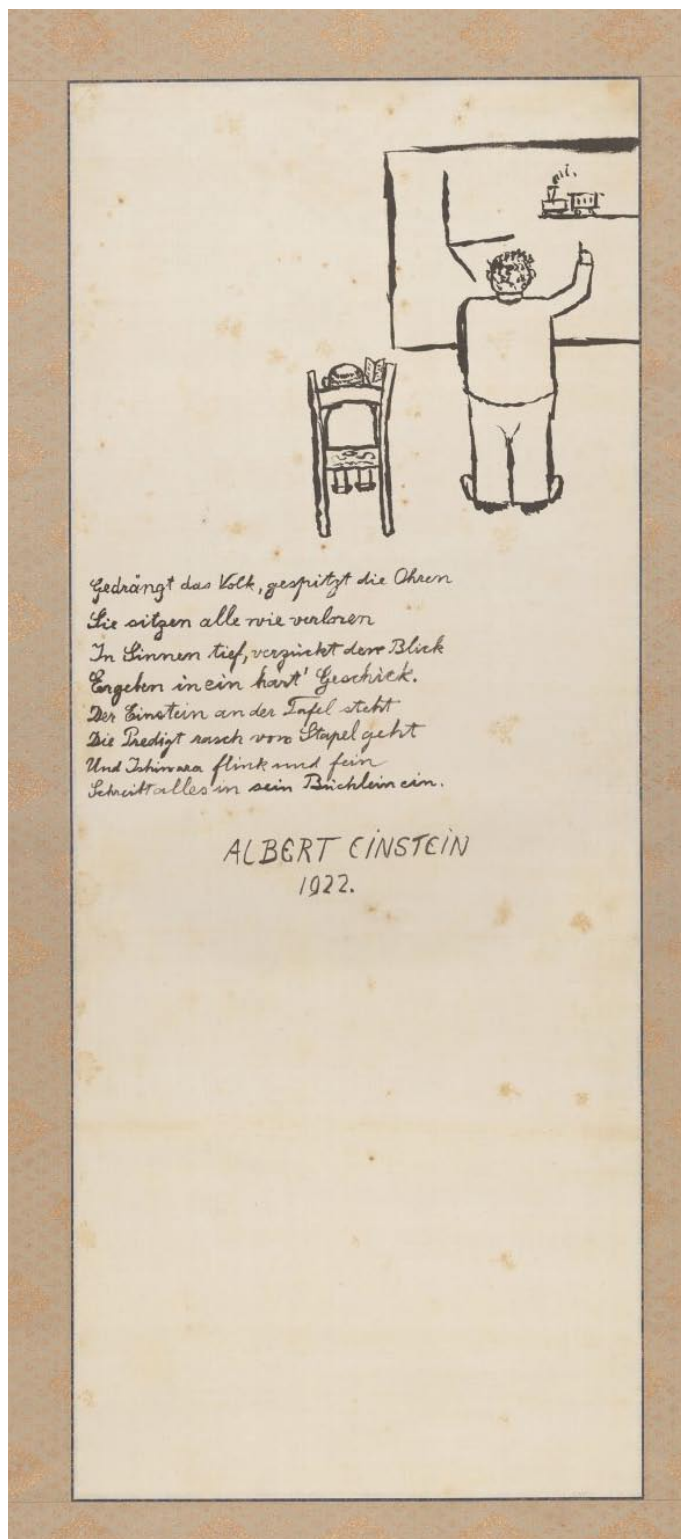
Sanehiko Yamamoto, a leading publisher and political figure in Japan, arranged a tour of his country for Albert Einstein in 1922. During his visit, Einstein delivered lectures at seven Japanese universities. At Keio University, he gave a marathon six-hour lecture on relativity. At Kyoto University, he delivered an impromptu speech about the origin of his famous theory. In gratitude for the visit and hospitality, Einstein created this scroll for Yamamoto. The drawing portrays Einstein at a blackboard explaining his theory of relativity, while the rhyming, self-parodying poem provides a glimpse of his humorous side.

The text of the poem in English translation follows:

The people crowded, the ears splashed.  
They all sit as if lost,  
Deep in thought, their gaze entranced,  
Surrendered to a hard subject.  
Einstein is at the blackboard;  
The sermon starts quickly,  
And Ishihara, nimble and fine,  
Writes everything down in his little book.

“Ishihara” is Jun Ishihara (1881–1947), a Japanese theoretical physicist known for his work on relativity and quantum theory, among other topics.

Other items from Einstein’s 1922 trip to Japan may be accessed from the exhibition website.





*40 Years, 40 Objects, continued*

## Special and Unusual

**B'reshit [In the Beginning]. 1926. Druckerei Gutenberg, Moscow. PJ5049.R82 B47x 1926.**

In the first years of Soviet rule, Jewish culture flourished in major Russian cities. A wealth of publications in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Russian appeared from this rich and vibrant literary scene. However, as anti-religion laws tightened in the 1920s, the Hebrew language was denounced, and Hebrew culture was effectively banned. This single-issue Hebrew literature periodical had to overcome tremendous bureaucratic and technical hurdles to get published despite receiving the censor's approval and a temporary license to print.



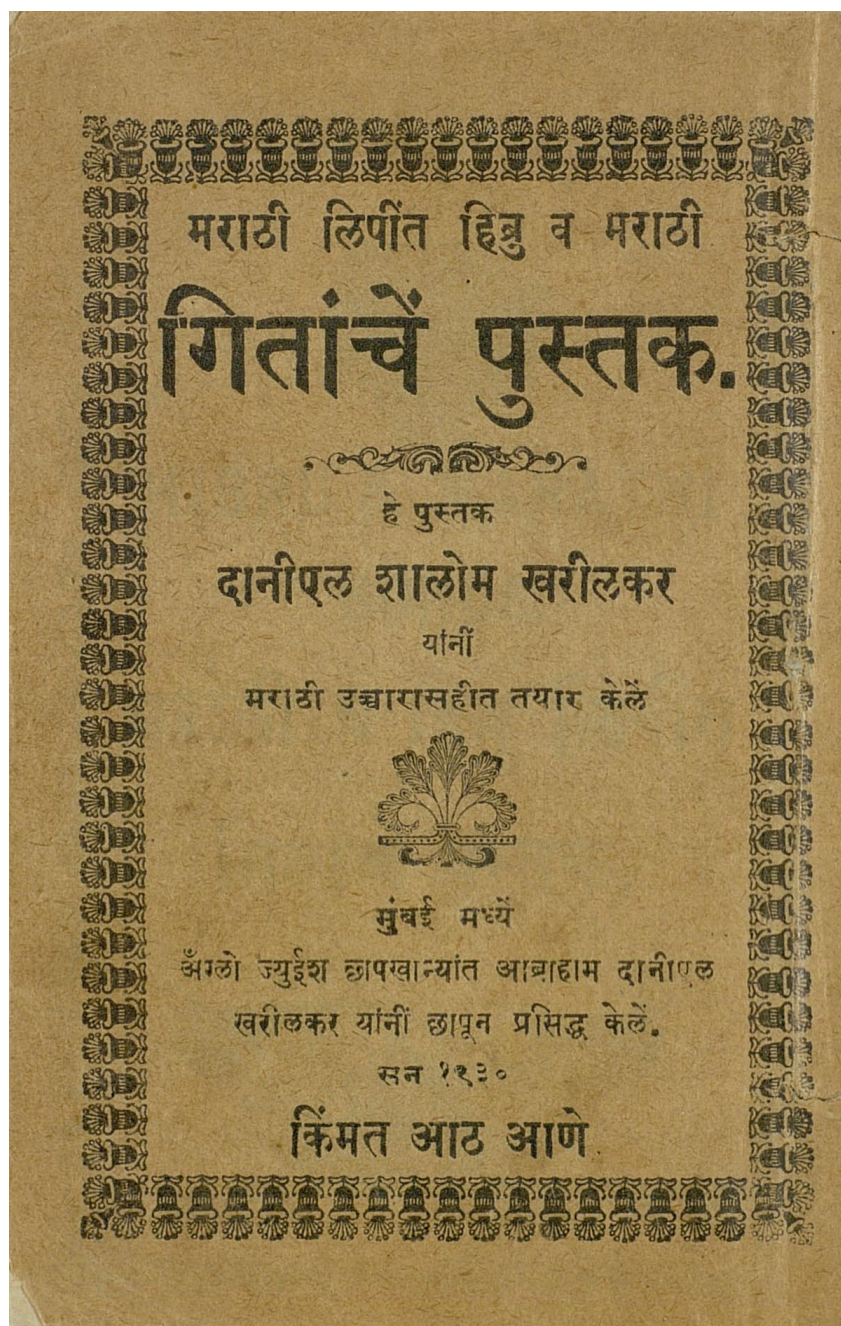
40 Years, 40 Objects, continued

## Journeys in Time and Space

**Marāṭhī va Hibru lipīnta gitāñcē pustaka [Hibru and Marathi Songs]. 1930. Bombay. BM675.Z4 Z6265 1925.**

The precise historical roots of the Bene Israel Jews of India remain unknown. Theories posit their arrival in India from as early as 500 BCE to as late as the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the Bene Israel lived for many centuries isolated from Jewish life elsewhere. As a result, they adopted the dress and many of the customs of their Konkan neighbors and spoke the mainstream Marathi language. The traditional Hebrew liturgical songs in this rare book are translated into Marathi for the Bene Israel community.

The entire book may be accessed from the exhibition website.





40 Years, 40 Objects, concluded

## Florida, Latin America, and the Caribbean



**Fraiwelt [Mundo Libre] [Free World].** March 1944. Liga Popular Israelita de México, México.

Partnership with Centro de Documentación e Investigación Judío de México.

Published in Mexico City by the communist Jewish organization Liga Israelita pro Ayuda a la Unión Soviética, the news magazine *Fraiwelt* was initially concerned with promoting issues of interest to fellow communists, particularly supporting the Soviet Union. The group later changed its name to Idishe Folks-Ligue. The new name enabled them to broaden their base and allow other Jews to join them in the struggle against fascism. In 1944, Boris Rosen, the editor of *Fraiwelt*, commissioned several cartoonists to design the magazine's front pages. These images depict Hitler's deathly aims and show Stalin, Churchill, and Roosevelt working together to overthrow him.





## Book Review: *Hell's Library Trilogy*, by A. J. Hackwith by Elenora Sabin

The title of the first volume of this trilogy, *The Library of the Unwritten*, caught my eye because of the word "Library." I clicked on the book, read the description, and decided this was a book I should read. It begins with a hunt and a chase. Claire, the librarian of the unwritten wing of Hell's library, discovers that a character in one of the books in her care has escaped and gone in search of his author. She enlists the help of Leto, a junior demon, and Brevity, a demoted muse assigned to be her assistant. The three of them set off in pursuit of the missing character.



Elenora Sabin

So what is the unwritten wing? It is a collection of all the books left unfinished by their authors, from the earliest times, when stories might be carved on bone or engraved in stone, up to the present. The escaped character is from a book left unfinished so recently that its author is still living, so the character finds a way to reach earth and locate his author to try to persuade her to finish his story. Claire and her assistants must foil his attempt.

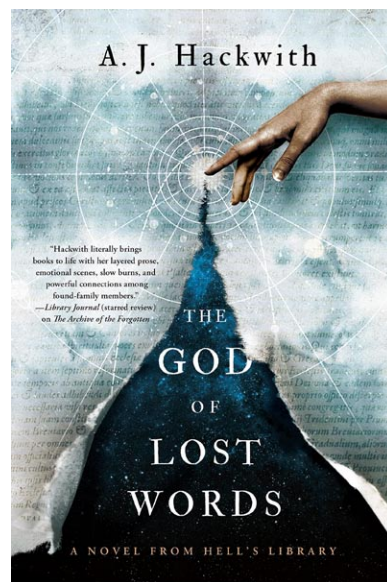
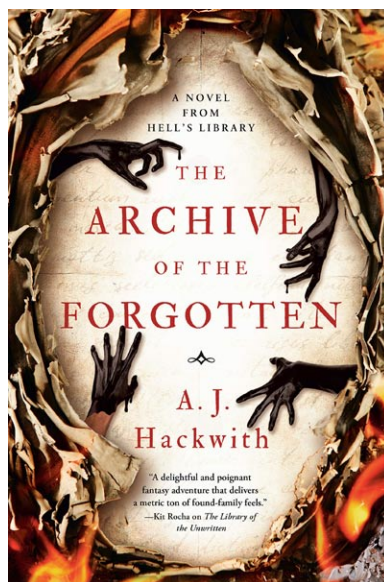
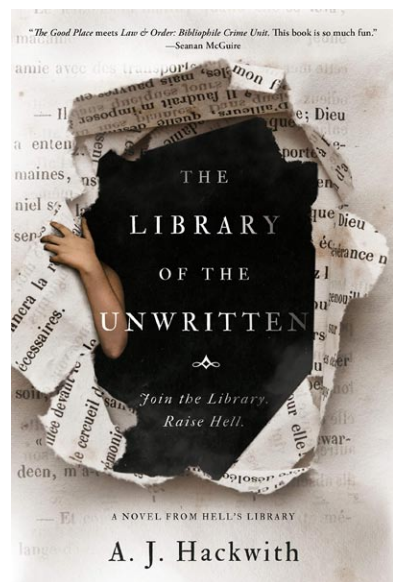
But the story is so much more than that brief summary implies. I once heard an author, whom I shall not name, boast that her novel had seven levels

### Hell's Library Trilogy

- *The Library of the Unwritten* (Ace, October 2019)
- *The Archive of the Forgotten* (Ace, October 2020)
- *The God of Lost Words* (Ace, Fall 2021)

of meaning. "Seven, Count them," she actually said. (I read two of her books and searched in vain for those seven levels.) A. J. Hackwith does not boast about the number of levels of meaning in her book, nor does she need to. The book tells a good story. In addition to the characters I've named, there is Ramiel, a fallen angel who hopes to earn the right to return to Heaven's realm; Uriel, an avenging angel; Walter, an avuncular hulk of a man who happens to be Death; and many other wonderful characters, not least of them the escapee, who claims for himself the name Hero.

The novel also delves into what makes a memorable character. One major requirement is a fascinating and often mysterious back-story. But there is much more. Is a character more than the ink with which it is written? What is the relationship between author and character? Between character and reader? Between author and reader? All of these questions are explored in depth throughout the





***Hell's Library Trilogy, concluded***

trilogy, while in no way diminishing the intense action of the unfolding plot.

Then there is the question of what a library is. Is it more than a collection of books? A conservatory? Is it not also a reservoir of past knowledge? A preserver of history? An illumination on the present? Hell's library considers itself a separate realm, its doors guarded against intrusion by Hell's demons, who wish to destroy it. Throughout human history and very much into contemporary times, there are those who launch attacks against libraries. We think of the destruction of famous libraries of the past and bemoan the loss of the precious knowledge they contained. Books are being banned and libraries censored today, but we don't always think of that as an attack on knowledge. Yet what else is it? There is a reason why Hackwith describes the evil demon Malphas, who leads the charge against Hell's library, as having the appearance of a caring grandmother who just wants the best for those who oppose her. And what is the responsibility of a librarian? Is it merely that of a custodian of books? Is it also to protect and preserve? And what about finding and providing readers?

Then there's the matter of Heaven. In Hackwith's novel, God seems to be missing, and the angels are concerned about her whereabouts. So we deal with the nature of God and the theological questions of what God is and whether God created humans or humanity creates its gods. What about judgment? What is the nature of goodness? What determines who deserves Heaven and who deserves Hell? Ramiel, a fallen angel, is the kindest, noblest character in the book, the only one who has no hidden dark secrets in his past.

And what about those hidden dark secrets in the pasts of the other characters? Are they what condemned them to Hell? Can those who are so condemned be redeemed? If they can, how can they be redeemed? Do we make our own Hell and, conversely, our own Heaven?

Also, what makes a hero? Or a villain? Can one character be both at different times?

Another question explored throughout the trilogy is what constitutes a family. How is a family formed? What does loyalty to one's family imply? Can one have a family that has nothing to do with biological relationship and everything to do with love and loyalty? The importance of building a family and how this happens is woven throughout Hackwith's trilogy.

Oh, and then there's the matter of free will. Do we have it? What does free will mean, really? Free to do whatever you want? Free to decide who you really are? And, finally, free to sacrifice yourself for those you love? For family? And what is love? What determines whom you love? And why? Or how?

Each chapter of the three novels opens with a quote from the logbook kept by all librarians. These quotes may be from librarians of the far past or recent librarians, including the present one. The quotes deal with all the matters I've listed above. They also demonstrate how the past impinges upon the present. We all know the saying that those who ignore the past are doomed to repeat it. But what of those who do learn from the past? What can it tell us? How can it guide our actions?

Which brings us back to the central idea of books. What is a book? Is it merely a collection of words on its pages? What do we mean when we say that a book "speaks" to us? What makes a book immortal or nearly so? What makes it dull and hackneyed? What happens to those books nobody reads any more? Are they not worth preserving?

Okay, I've given you more than seven levels of meaning. I dare you to read these three books. I think you'll be far too busy enjoying the story and reveling in the beauty of all its interwoven meanings to bother counting levels. These books are classified as fantasies, but you don't need to be a fantasy reader to enjoy them. You just have to love books, libraries, and damned good writing.



## What Dickens Ate, By Mrs. Dickens

**P**erhaps the name Catherine Dickens is not immediately recognized by the average bibliophile. If one guessed that there was a relationship with a more famous Dickens, one would be correct.

Catherine Hogarth was the oldest of George Hogarth's 10 children (apparently no relationship to the more famous Hogarth). He was trained in music and musicology and worked as a journalist in Edinburgh, first for the *Edinburgh Courant* and then for the *Morning Chronicle*, where a young journalist named Charles Dickens was employed.

Charles was immediately taken with Catherine, and they married in 1836. They settled in a small home in Bloomsbury – a time that Dickens would come to regard as the happiest of his life.

That same year, Dickens published his first book, *Sketches by Boz*, which collected some of his newspaper and periodical writings. (Boz was a family nickname.) That same year, he began the serialized publication of *The Pickwick Papers*, and his son Charles, Jr., was born. Novels and children continued to follow in quick succession, year after year, and by 1852 there were 13 novels and 10 children.

For Charles, Sr., the exhilaration of success and rising social position were strained by the financial challenges of supporting so large a family. To say that he was famous is an understatement; he was a true celebrity, with all that implies, including much attention and curiosity toward himself, his family, their habits, etc. as well as the social obligations of success.

Penelope Vogler of the Charles Dickens Museum writes:

Dickens was a famous host and raconteur, fuelling his dinners with humour and games, and his wife was clearly an excellent hostess. Literary letters of the time are abuzz with reports of “pleasant” (Longfellow) or “charming” (Mrs Cowden-Clarke) dinners; Wilkie Collins admires the dinner and the



Catherine Dickens in an engraving by Edwin Roffe, after Daniel Maclise

table decorated with flowers, including a nosegay beside each napkin. Jane Carlyle waspishly writes that the Dickens's dinner parties with their “quantities of artificial flowers” and “overloaded dessert” were too grand for a “literary man.” She works herself to a pitch of excitement because “the very candles rose each out of an artificial rose! Good God!”

Around 1851, Catherine, the hostess behind all this entertaining, responded to the “ever-recurring inquiry” about what the Dickens family enjoyed at tea-time by producing a book of her own. The title, *What Shall We Have for Dinner?*, must have been a common question in the Dickens household.

The volume is slender, with about 70 pages. The title page gives the author as Lady Maria Clutterbuck. The name is that of a character in a French farce in which Catherine Dickens had performed. The two-page introduction is signed



*What Dickens Ate, continued*

*What Shall We Have for Dinner?*, by Lady Maria Clutterbuck, a pseudonym for Catherine Dickens

“M. C.”, but is believed to have been written by Charles Dickens.

The author then gives 40 pages of Victorian “bills of fare,” which are menus with several courses for up to 20 diners. This suggests Catherine’s readiness and ability to entertain. An appendix gives recipes (“receipts”) for the dishes in the bills of fare.

Vogler describes the book’s culinary style as “high Victoriana; vegetables are outnumbered by fish and meat, and no dinner party today (even for 20 people) would attempt so many dishes: two soups, three fish, ten – mostly meaty – offerings in the third course, three or four in the next; five puddings and perhaps three savouries (Dickens liked to round a meal off with toasted cheese).”

To our ears, many of the dishes listed in the bills of fare might appear, as Vogler suggests, “off-puttingly bourgeois,” but “at the time they would have been the height of fashion. Cauliflower with parmesan may sound almost mundane, but it was the recipe of Charles Elme Francatelli, Queen Victoria’s Anglo-Italian chef. The roast mutton with pungent sauce seems almost clinically named, but it was the recipe of Alexis Soyer, one of the most flamboyant chefs of the day.

The slightness of the volume may make it seem insubstantial, but Vogler finds that its selections show “considerable culinary interest and knowledge. The grand menus are fascinating, requiring a grasp of seasonality (Catherine gives the months that each menu could be served) and a practical understanding of what a female cook (rather than a trained chef) working with limited oven and stove-top space in an urban kitchen could

produce.”

Against what may appear a frivolous backdrop of candles placed in artificial roses, the year 1851 was one of the most difficult for the Dickensens. In April, their ninth child, Dora, died at eight months of age. At the time of Dora’s death at her home in London, Catherine was recovering from nervous exhaustion in the spa town of Malvern, over a hundred miles away. The treatments there, or perhaps just the environment, had a very beneficial effect. Dickens managed the news of Dora’s death with sensitivity, and at first, Catherine received that news “with resignation,” but her deep grief became more and more evident. At the same time, her father-in-law was hospitalized and died. The couple were caught in a crossfire of grief.

It has been suggested that the book project was taken up by Catherine to distract her from these events and provide a new focus. The book may have been completed and published quickly in the summer of 1851, but no first edition of the book is known. A second edition, published in October 1851, provides an approximate date of first publication.

*What Shall We Have for Dinner?* went through five editions, the last in 1860.

Those ten years, 1851–1860, were tumultuous for Catherine. She barely had time to recover from the deaths of Dora and the elder Dickens when she became pregnant with her last child, Edward, who was born in 1852. Her husband, who had found her so ideal a companion in their early years, became increasingly dissatisfied. He reported to a friend that he and Catherine had become incompatible.

*What Dickens Ate, continued*

In 1857, a gift intended for an actress in one of his plays was accidentally delivered to the Dickens's home. Catherine accused Dickens of an affair, but he denied it. In 1858, Dickens pressured Catherine to leave their home, and they separated. She was given a house, and her eldest son went to live with her. The actress, Ellen Ternan, became Dickens's partner and would remain with him until his death in 1870 at age 58. Catherine would live for another nine years.

After their separation, Dickens was unkind about his wife, describing a woman who was mentally unbalanced and unfit to raise children. His open dissatisfaction was repeated by his biographers, which contrasted with the author's towering fame to put Catherine in an unflattering light that survived for more than a century. Fortunately, in recent years, research has produced a more balanced view of both the author and his wife.

In 2005, Susan Rossi-Wilcox, a curator of Harvard's glass flower museum, gave Catherine's slim volume full curatorial treatment in *Dinner for Dickens: The Culinary History of Mrs. Charles Dickens's Menu Books* (Prospect Books, 2005). The question asked by the book, "What shall we have for dinner?," is answered in the daily menu books that Catherine kept and were preserved because they were part of her husband's estate. Rossi-Wilcox used these primary materials and others from the Dickens estate to reveal "a woman passionately engaged with the whole business of keeping a good table (and, by implication, a good pantry, still-room and kitchen too). Instead of a domestic dowdy, reliant on a small repertoire of early to mid Victorian staples, Rossi-Wilcox finds a sprightly intelligence keen to graft dishes learned while living abroad in France and Italy on to a stock of sturdy 'Scotch' staples that reflect a much-loved Edinburgh childhood" (Kathryn Hughes in *The Guardian*).



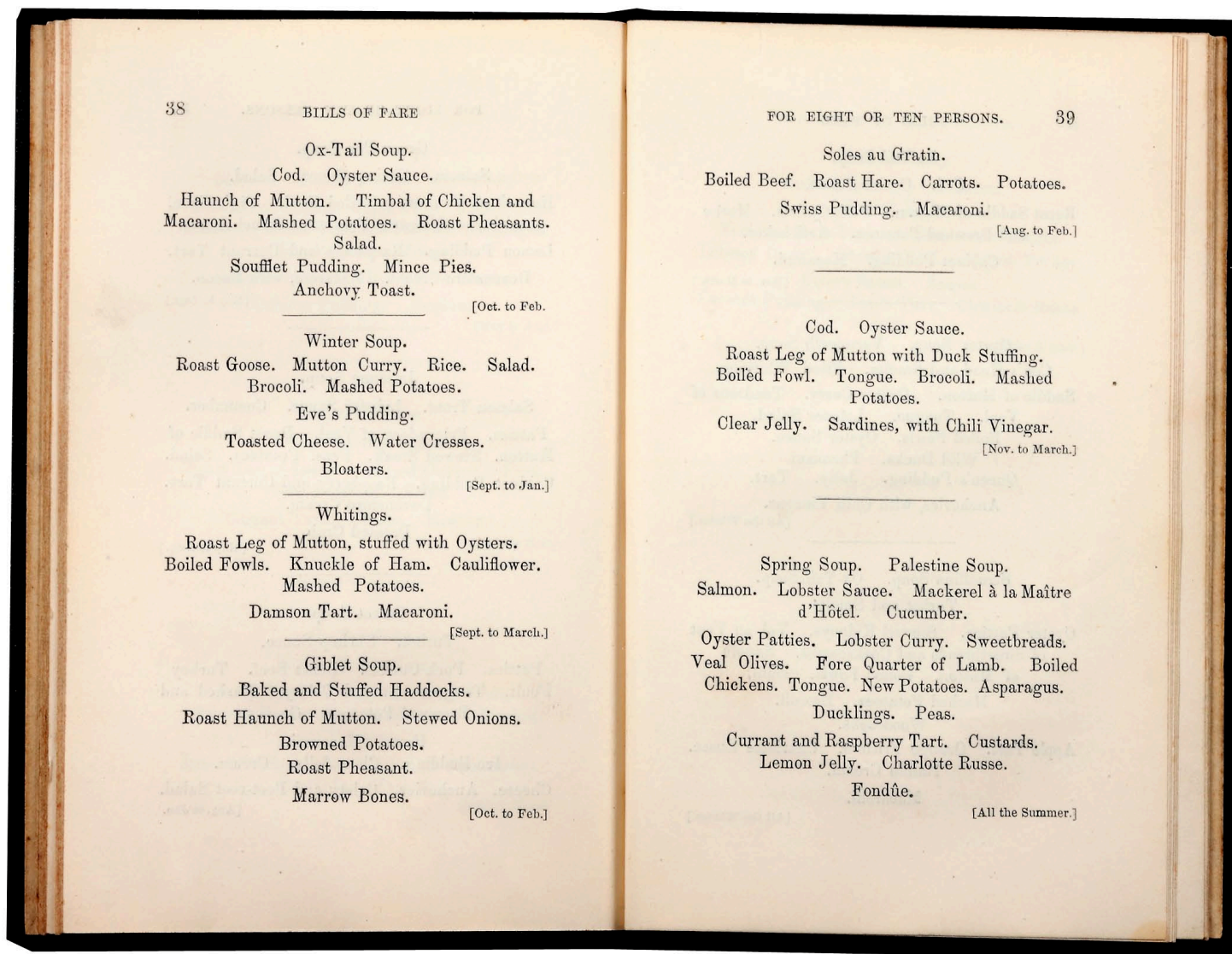
*The Dickenses' dining room as preserved in the Dickens Museum*

Rossi-Wilcox also presents a detailed review of each edition of *What Shall We Have for Dinner?* She examines the changes in Victorian tastes that are revealed in the changes in successive editions. Through these studies, Catherine emerges as a capable and resourceful woman.

A more direct approach was taken in Lillian Nayder's fully-fledged biography *The Other Dickens: A Life of Catherine Hogarth* (Cornell, 2010). Nayder is Professor and Chair of English at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. She teaches courses on 19<sup>th</sup>-century British fiction, including "Jane Austen: Then and Now," "The Brontës," and "Dickens Revised."

Nayder makes use of the Dickenses' banking records and legal papers and correspondence with friends and family members to retell Catherine's story. The story now pivots from the version of Dickens and his admirers to Catherine's, with her cultured background, her years of devotion to the great author, her relationships with her sisters, including the youngest, Helen, who was her staunchest ally during the breakdown of her marriage. Nayder gives us a three-dimensional



*What Dickens Ate, concluded***TO BOIL CAULIFLOWER WITH PARMESAN.**

Boil a cauliflower, drain it on a sieve, and cut it into convenient-sized pièces, arrange these pieces in a pudding-basin so as to make them resemble a cauliflower on the dish, season it as you proceed, turn it on the dish, then cover it with a sauce made of grated parmesan cheese, butter, and the yolks of a couple of eggs seasoned with lemon juice, pepper, salt, and nutmeg, and put parmesan grated over it; bake for twenty minutes and brown it.

**Menus for Discriminating Victorians**

A representative spread from *What Shall We Have for Dinner?* is shown above. These menus are intended to serve 8 to 10 persons. (Imagine the shopping list!)

At the left is a "useful receipt," one of many supplied in Dickens's appendix for the dishes suggested in the menus.



## Books in Brief

### Print Culture, Agency, and Regionality in the Hand Press Period

Rachel Stenner, Kaley Kramer, Adam J. Smith (eds.)  
Palgrave Macmillan  
276 pp., 2022

#### Print Culture, Agency, and Regionality in the Hand Press Period examines the influence of the print trades on British regional culture.

Rather than using a “London vs. the provinces” approach, this book reframes that discussion by looking at Britain as a collection of regional cultures in which print accelerated a self-awareness and definition of local culture. This process and the interaction of these regional cultures help define important processes of cultural development. The contributions in the book examine many aspects of print’s interaction and influence, including the political, mercantile, and cultural. This activity helped develop and solidify regional identities as well as situating the regions on the larger national and global scenes.

Through investigations of the men and women of the print trades outside of London, this collection casts new light on the strategies of self-representation evident in the work of regional print cultures, as well as their contributions to individual regional identities and national narratives.



**Rachel Stenner** is Senior Lecturer in English Literature in the School of Media, Arts, and Humanities, University of Sussex, UK. She is author of *The Typographic Imaginary in Early Modern English Literature* (2018).

**Kaley Kramer** is Deputy Head of English at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. She is co-editor of *The Literary Imagination* (2020).



**Adam James Smith** is Senior Lecturer in 18<sup>th</sup> Literature at York St John University, UK. He works on cheap eighteenth-century political printings, with particular interest in works of protest and satire.

Source: Springer



### Making Pictorial Print: Media Literacy and Mass Culture in British Magazines, 1885–1918

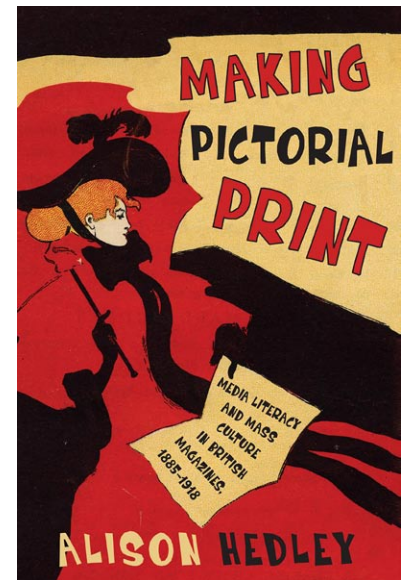
Alison Hedley  
University of Toronto Press  
248 pp., 2022

#### At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, print media dominated British popular culture, with greater variety and on a larger scale than ever before.

With the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new visual and auditory media began to displace print from its central position in cultural life. During this period of intense change, illustrated magazines maintained their place in the media landscape by transforming from a textual orientation into a visual and multimodal one, setting the stage for the new media cultures of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

*Making Pictorial Print* applies media theory and the digital humanities to analyse four popular late-Victorian magazines – the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, *Pearson’s Magazine*, and the *Strand* – and the scrapbook media that appropriated them. These case studies demonstrate the terms of engagement periodical design aesthetics presented to readers. Shaped by publishers, advertisers, and readers themselves, the pages of these periodicals document the emergence of modern mass culture as we know it and offer insight into the new media of our digital present.

**Alison Hedley**, a former Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at McGill University, is communications coordinator for RSVP, the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals.



Source: Univ. of Toronto Press; alisonhedley.com

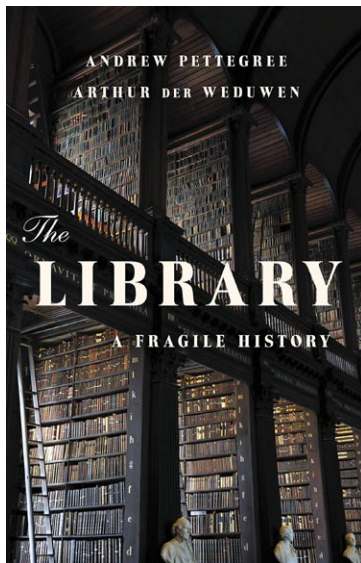


*Books in Brief, continued***The Library: A Fragile History**

Andrew Pettegree, Arthur der Weduwen

Basic Books

528 pp., 2021



In *Inside Higher Ed*, Joshua Kim describes *The Library: A Fragile History* as “ambitious in its scope and detail-oriented in its execution. The book traces the entire history of libraries, inclusive of private, state, public and academic libraries.” Ambitious indeed.

Historians Pettegree and der Weduwen introduce the reader to the antiquarians and philanthropists who

shaped the world’s great collections. They trace the rise and fall of literary tastes and reveal the high crimes and misdemeanors committed in pursuit of rare manuscripts. In doing so, they reveal that while collections themselves are fragile, often falling into ruin within a few decades, the idea of the library has been remarkably resilient as each generation makes and remakes the institution anew.

At 528 pages, Kim describes the book as daunting and recommends the delightful audiobook.



**Andrew Pettegree**, professor of modern history at the University of St. Andrews, is a leading expert on the history of book and media transformations, with several books on these subjects.

**Arthur ver Weduwen** is a historian and postdoctoral fellow at the University of St. Andrews, with an interest in early modern cultural and political history (1500–1800).



Sources: Basic Books; *Inside Higher Ed*

**Tolkien’s Gown and Other Stories of Famous Authors and Rare Books**

R.A. Gekoski

Constable

256 pp., 2005

Rick Gekoski, rare book dealer, academic, publisher, critic, bibliographer, and broadcaster, has been described as the Bill Bryson of the book world. His BBC Radio series *Rare Books, Rare People* was acclaimed by *The Daily Telegraph* as “one of the gems of Radio 4.”

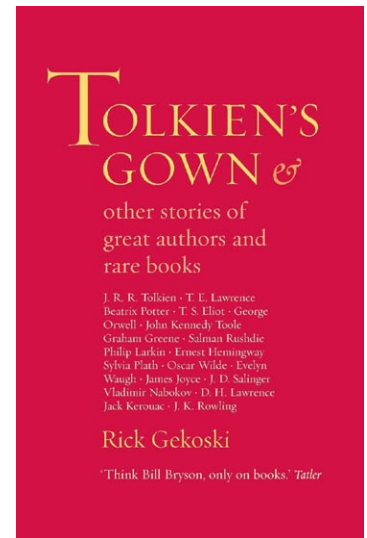
In *Tolkien’s Gown*, based loosely on the hugely successful radio series, Gekoski discusses twenty great works of modern literature as both texts and objects. At once erudite and funny, the essays give a publishing biography of each book, together with comments about the author’s involvement with first editions of the works.

“What is the value of a book?” he asks. The answers are both critical and financial, involving appraisals of the literary qualities of the works and an account of their (sometimes surprising) value as rare books. The stories are fascinating and diverse and involve memorable encounters with, among others, Graham Greene, William Golding, J. D. Salinger, Ted Hughes, Salman Rushdie, and Harold Pinter. For anyone who loves books, *Tolkien’s Gown* offers a wealth of amusement and instruction, and enough literary anecdotes to last a lifetime.

**Rick Gekoski**, a Missouri native, took a Ph.D. at Oxford and taught English at the University of Warwick. In 1982, he became a full-time rare book dealer, specialising in 20<sup>th</sup>-century first editions and manuscripts.

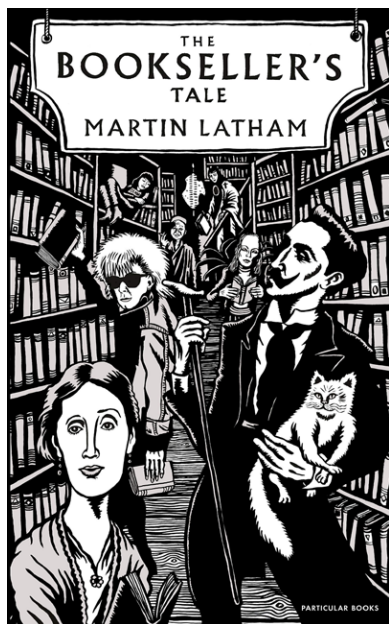


Sources: Constable; Toorak Novel Idea Bookshop; Wikipedia



*Books in Brief, concluded***The Bookseller's Tale**

Martin Latham  
Particular Books  
349 pp., 2020



The bookseller is **Martin Latham**, who has been in the business for 35 years. But the tale is not “those funny ‘anecdotes from a bookshop’ ... It is rather a history and celebration of all things bookish.”

*The Bookseller's Tale* is the story of a love affair with books – both ours and Latham's – how we arrange them on shelves, inhale their smell, scrawl in their margins or just curl up with them in

bed. Latham takes us on a journey through comfort reads, street book stalls, mythical libraries, itinerant pedlars, radical pamphleteers, extraordinary bookshop customers and fanatical collectors. Canterbury bookseller Martin Latham uncovers the curious history of our book obsession – and his own. Latham discusses his father's book collecting, which he believes is “connected to his own father and mother abandoning him as a baby,” working class and women's reading, and the abundance of monkeys' bums in illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages.

The revelations about American librarian Melvil Dewey (the Dewey decimal system) alone are worth the price of admission.

**Martin Latham** currently runs Waterstones Canterbury. He is proud to have filed the biggest petty cash claim in the chain's history to pay for the excavation of a Roman bath house under the shop's floor.



Sources: *The Guardian*; Particular Books

**Bookstores: A Celebration of Independent Booksellers**

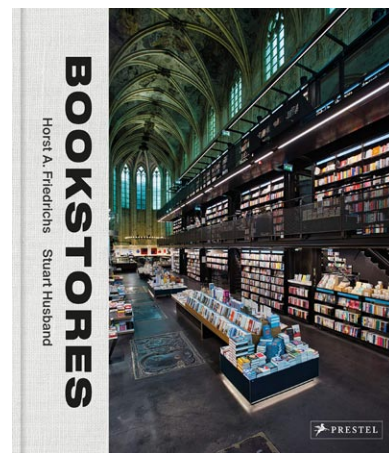
Stuart Husband, Horst A. Friedrichs (photographer)  
Prestel  
256 pp., 2021

Bookstores are treasure troves of knowledge and ideas, invaluable for the imagination, and often reflect their owners' personalities in ways Internet behemoths could never recreate. In this book, photographer Friedrichs celebrates brick-and-mortar bookstores, showcasing their variety, quirkiness, and vitality. *Bookstores* celebrates the owners as well with interviews and anecdotes. Explore William Stout Books, a specialty store for architecture and art books in San Francisco, Baldwin's Book Barn in Pennsylvania, a 5-story bookstore housed in a dairy barn open since the mid-1940s, the UK's first and only dedicated LGBTQI bookshop, and Livraria Lello, an art deco temple to reading in Porto, Portugal. From historic buildings that evoke a different time and place to brand-new, high-tech, architect-designed spaces, what all the bookstores have in common is that they are all dedicated to spreading the written word to their communities. This is an ideal book for anyone who loves to read, browse, or simply linger in the analog world of books and bookstores.

**Stuart Husband** is a London-based writer and travel journalist. He has written for *The Telegraph*, *Observer*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Independent*.



Sources: Prestel



**Horst A. Friedrichs** is a photographer whose work has appeared in *The Independent*, *The New York Times*, and *Stern*, and he is the author of many books.







*The "Ellen Terry Shakespeare" remains the smallest set of the Bard's complete works. Published by David Bryce of Glasgow in 1904, each book is just over 2 inches tall (compare U.S. penny) and bound in morocco with gilt lettering. The revolving bookcase is one of the original display options offered by Bryce.*



## This Month's Writers and Contributors

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

Jude Bagatti • Ed Cifelli •  
David Hall • Jerry Morris •  
Linda Morris • Maureen E. Mulvihill •  
Carl Mario Nudi • Elenora Sabin •  
Gary Simons • Ben Wiley

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

## Join FBS!

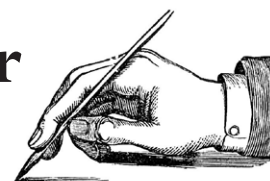
If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group. You will find contact emails on the last page of this newsletter.



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

### January 2022



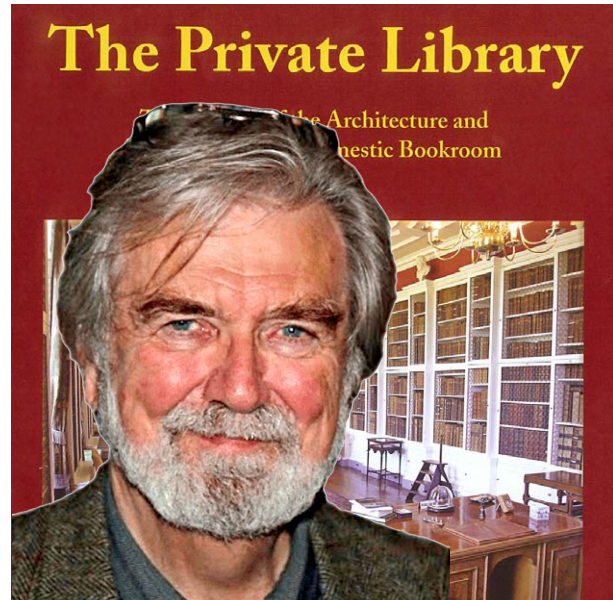
#### Elaine Togneri: What if? Writing Short Fiction for Fun and Profit

Due to the surge of Covid omicron cases in Florida, this presentation will be on on Zoom. Contact Jerry Morris to obtain the link.

**January 16, 2022, 1:30 p.m.**

Elaine Togneri has over forty published short stories in markets ranging from webzines and anthologies (*Malice Domestic 15: Murder Most Theatrical*) to major magazines (*Woman's World*). Her story "Genius" appears in this year's MWA Anthology, *When a Stranger Comes to Town*. She is a member of Mystery Writers of America and Sisters in Crime. Elaine holds an M.A. in English from Rutgers University and is the founder of the Sisters in Crime – New Jersey Chapter. Webpage: [sites.google.com/site/elainetogneri](https://sites.google.com/site/elainetogneri)

### February 2022



#### Reid Byers: The Private Library Macdonald-Kelce Library 401 W. Kennedy Blvd, Tampa, FL

(also available on Zoom)

**February 20, 2022, 1:30 p.m.**

Reid Byers's *The Private Library: The History of the Architecture and Furnishing of the Domestic Bookroom* (Oak Knoll Press, 2021) was named by the *Washington Post* as one of 2021's 50 notable works of nonfiction: "Beautifully designed, Byers' 500-page masterwork lays out how cultures from antiquity to the present created welcoming, comfortable spaces to house books." This book was the product of many years of work as Byers moved from minister to computer programmer to IT architect to journalist and several other vocations and avocations in which he lived out his far-ranging interests and intellect. At the heart of most of them were his books. His subject and this presentation will be close to the heart of all bibliophiles. Byers is currently vice president of Maine's Baxter Club, part of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies.





## Book Events, Podcasts, and More

Know of any events of interest to book lovers? Send corrections and additions to Charles Brown, [cmbrown@atlantic.net](mailto:cmbrown@atlantic.net).

### Florida Book Events – Jan.–Feb. 2022

January 6–9

#### Annual Key West Literary Seminar: “A Seminar Named Desire”

Key West, FL ([www.kwls.org/](http://www.kwls.org/))

January 7 to February 7

#### 33rd Annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities

Eatonville, FL ([www.zorafestival.org/](http://www.zorafestival.org/))

January 8–9

#### St. Pete Comic Con

St. Petersburg Coliseum

(<https://stpete.floridacomicons.com/>)

January 13–15, 2022

#### F.R.E.S.H. Book Festival

Daytona Beach, Florida

<https://www.freshbookfestivals.net/>

January 14, 10:30 a.m.

#### Ringling Literati Book Club, Sarasota, FL

Featured book: *Provenance: How a Con Man and a Forger Rewrote the History of Modern Art* by Laney Salisbury

January 15–22

#### Writers in Paradise (Eckerd College Writers Conference)

St. Petersburg, FL ([writersinparadise.eckerd.edu/](http://writersinparadise.eckerd.edu/))

January 27–30

#### Florida Storytelling Festival

(sponsored by The Florida Story Association)

Mount Dora, FL (<http://flstory.com/festival/>)

January 29–30

#### Sunshine State Book Festival

Oaks Mall and Matheson History Museum,

Gainesville, FL

(<https://www.sunshinestatebookfestival.com/>)

### 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:

Dec. 10 – Bookselling in Maine

Nov. 26 – Bookselling in Finland: Moraine Books

Oct. 25 – *Grapes of Wrath* Manuscript

### Rare Book Cafe

Rare Book Cafe covers all aspects of books in “the only live-streamed program about antiquarian books, ephemera, and more....” Produced by St. Pete journalist T. Allan Smith, RBC streams on most Saturdays. View on [Rare Book Cafe website \(on Facebook\)](#) or YouTube, or listen to *Rare Book Cafe Raw* on podcast sites.

**Nov. 27 (S6 E43):** Guest book collector and bookseller Larry Rakow of Wonderland Books in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, explores the amazing world of magic lanterns, those story-telling devices that enthralled 19<sup>th</sup>-century audiences. Barbara Loe of Cardtique in Osprey, Fla., offers a look at some vintage Christmas die-cut cards or “scraps” from various countries. In *Things Found in Old Books*, David Hess (The Book Man, Orange, Calif.) finds a mail-in envelope for Instamatic cartridges, a 1968 pocket calendar, and more. Co-host Lee Linn tells about a trip to Georgia, her visit with Cafe regular Mary Kay Watson in Morgantown, W. Va., and some of the treasures she found along the way.

### The Biblio File, with Nigel Beale

[THE BIBLIO FILE](#) 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:

**Dec. 25 – Steven Heller on Graphic Designer Paul Rand.** Heller is an eminent American graphic designer, art director, critic, scholar, and author or co-author of 200 books related to graphic design.

**Dec. 17 – Daniel Mendelsohn on the Critic’s Role.** Mendelsohn is a bestselling author, critic, essayist, and translator, published in many periodicals.

**Dec. 14 – Michael Cader with Evergreen Advice for Book Publishers.** Michael is the founder of *Publisher’s Lunch*, the largest book publishing industry publication in the world.

**Dec. 7 – Bill Matthews on His Life in Books, Mostly on the West Coast.** Matthews has dealt in books, manuscripts, maps, etc. since 1976, in Canada and the U.S. He now owns The Haunted Bookshop in Sydney, B.C.

*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.

### *Upcoming episodes:*

**Jan. 28, 2 p.m. – Matthew G. Kirschenbaum:** *Bitstreams: The Future of Digital Literary Heritage.* What are the future prospects for literary knowledge now that literary texts – and the material remains of authorship, publishing, and reading – are reduced to strings of digital ones and zeros? What are the opportunities and obligations for book history, textual criticism, and bibliography when literary texts are distributed across digital platforms, devices, formats, and networks?

**Feb. 24, 2 p.m. – Reed Gochberg:** *Useful Objects: Museums, Science, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century America.* Gochberg examines the history of American museums during the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the eyes of visitors, writers, and collectors. Museums of this period included a wide range of objects, from botanical and zoological specimens to antiquarian artifacts and technological models. Intended to promote “useful knowledge,” these collections generated broader discussions about how objects were selected, preserved, and classified. In guidebooks and periodicals, visitors described their experiences within museum galleries and marveled at the objects they encountered. In fiction, essays, and poems, writers embraced the imaginative possibilities represented by collections and proposed alternative systems of arrangement.

## The Book Collector Podcast

In 1952, James Bond author Ian Fleming created *The Book Collector*, a “unique periodical for bibliophiles,” which featured a wide range of articles pertaining to book collecting, modern first editions, typography, national libraries, and numerous matters of interest to book collectors. 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 [51 podcasts](#) available on SoundCloud. Recent additions include:

- Portrait of a Bibliophile XIV: Marx and Engels
- My Uncle Ian, by James Fleming
- Collecting Ian Fleming, by Jon Gilbert

## 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.

[The Bodleian Libraries \(BODcasts\)](#) – Hidden treasures of medieval illumination, finding the true texts of Christmas carols, and much more.

## Grolier Club of New York Videos

The Grolier Club of New York has posted over [230 videos on Vimeo](#), including many virtual exhibition openings, tours, and show-and-tell episodes.

### *Recent episodes:*

[“Glorious Flights” Lecture by Children’s Book Historian Leonard Marcus](#)

[Virtual Exhibition Tour: “The New Woman Behind the Camera” at the Met](#)

[“From Craft to Graduate Study: The Professionalization of Book Conservation” by Grolier member Dr. Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa](#)





## Florida Bibliophile Society 2021–2022 Season



FBS meetings may be in-person or via Zoom as conditions warrant. Check the Upcoming Events page for details.

**September 19 • FBS Members – September Show and Tell:** Covid can't stop the collectors! Attendees shared recent additions to their collections.

**October 17 • Ed Cifelli – “The Capitalist of Po’ Biz” or, John Ciardi: America’s Millionaire Poet:** Ed is the author of two books about the poet John Ciardi. Not only one of the most important 20th-century American poets, Ciardi had a fascinating life story and was a media personality in his day.

**November 21 • Kurt Zimmerman – Some Rare Book Hunting Escapades:** Kurt, founder and president of the Book Hunters Club of Houston, shared some of the quests that led to his recent book *Rare Book Hunting: Essays and Escapades* (2020). For several years, Kurt was director of rare books and maps for Butterfield and Butterfield Auctions, San Francisco.

**December 19 • FBS Holiday Party:** Another gala occasion was experienced at the home of Ben and Joyce Wiley. Out appetizers and cocktails were followed by a delicious buffet of members’ specialties, dessert, and coffee. We lingered over conversation, Christmas crackers, and a surprise gift exchange.

**January 16 • Elaine Togneri – What if? Writing Short Fiction for Fun and Profit:** Elaine has published fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, but she is best known for her mystery stories, which have been published on the Web, in anthologies, and in major magazines.

**February 20 • Reid Byers – The Private Library:** Reid’s varied career has included minister, welder, and computer programmer, among others. He is author of *Private Library: The History of the Architecture and*

*Furnishing of the Domestic Bookroom* (Oak Knoll Press, 2021).

**March 20 • Boštjan Petrič – Book Collecting in Slovenia:** Boštjan describes himself as a “book collector, bibliomaniac, and book enthusiast.” Through his [Fate of Books](#) blog, he provides a Slovenian perspective on book collecting and on his special interest, libricide, i.e., the destruction of books. His blog comes with a moral: no matter how obscure the book, there is a collector somewhere who would love to possess it.

**March 31 • Special Event at Largo Public Library – Ed Centeno: Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* Still Relevant to Modern Times.** Ed will share insights and selections from his outstanding Whitman collection.

**April 1–3 • Florida Antiquarian Book Fair** is one of the largest book fairs in the U.S. It will be held as usual at the St. Pete Coliseum. FBS hosts a table at the entrance where we answer questions and hold parcels for visitors. Many visitors sign up for our newsletter, and some join FBS. A highlight occurs on Sunday when FBS collectors provide free book evaluations.

**April 17 • Ray Betzner – Studies in Starrett:** Betzner became addicted to Sherlock Holmes at an early age, which led him to the Holmes scholar Charles Vincent Emerson Starrett. “Studies in Starrett” is Ray’s blog in which he explores “Starrett’s work, his connections with other writers, and his influence, especially in the world of Sherlock Holmes.”

**May 15 • Banquet:** We will be watching carefully to see if a May banquet is possible and advisable. Stay tuned!

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



## Endpaper • The Wonder of the Book



In an interview on the *Shalom Show*, Rebecca Jefferson, introduced earlier in this issue as head of the Price Library of Judaica, spoke about the challenges faced by Jewish books over the past two millennia – the books, no less than the people, have faced destruction, suppression, and banishment. Jefferson describes it as a “miracle” that so much has survived. Many books and manuscripts that were unique records of individuals or communities are now lost, perhaps forever. In other cases, the books are all that remain. Jewish culture has survived to flourish wherever it could and to enrich the communities and nations of which it is a part. Many books have also unaccountably survived. Through scatterings and re-collections, we have a remarkable record of over 2,000 years of Jewish history. Books are remarkably durable, and this is an outstanding example of the role that books have

played for thousands of years in many cultures. Without them, there is no record. Without them, we would still be reliant on the small group of people – priests or troubadors – who remember (more or less) and recite.

There are so many books, and they are so ubiquitous that it is easy to take them for granted. And possibly, many books are superfluous. I think of the thousands of cookbooks that are produced every year, and yet consider how much has been learned from Mrs. Dickens’s cookbook with the needed time, attention, and insight. We cannot easily say now what the value of all those books piled high and heavily discounted at Ollie’s might be in 10, 50, or 100 years.

For bibliophiles this is a wonder, and every book represents some product of human intellect or emotion and has its own value and potential.

See you at the bookstore! — Charles

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