

The Florida Bibliophile

March 2023 • Volume 39, No. 7



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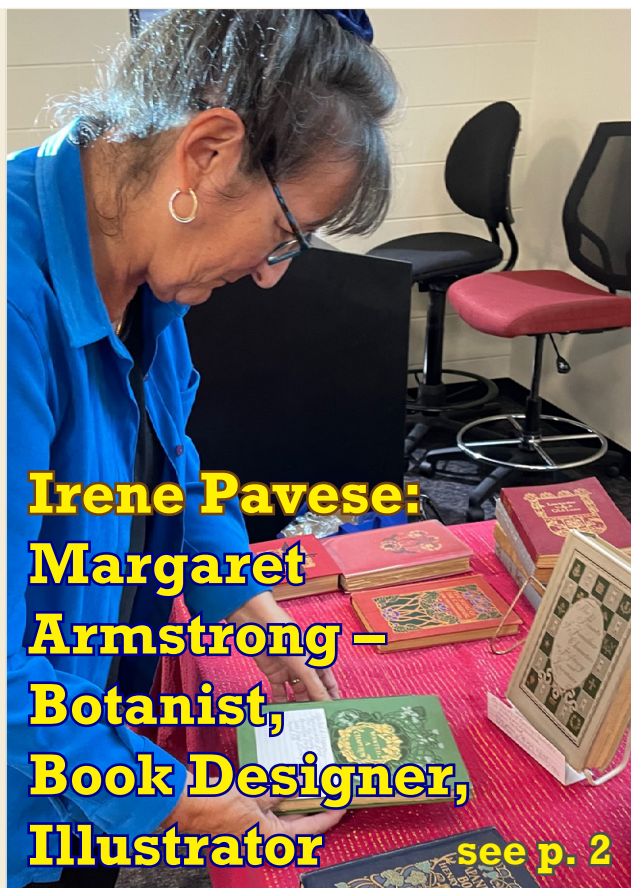
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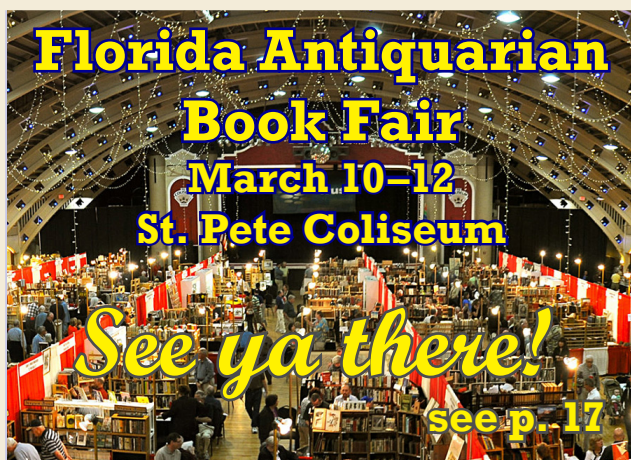
Join FBS! See p. 23

April newsletter deadline: March 30, 2023 (see p. 23)

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 2022 FABS Journal [here](#).



**Irene Pavese:
Margaret
Armstrong –
Botanist,
Book Designer,
Illustrator** see p. 2



**Florida Antiquarian
Book Fair
March 10–12
St. Pete Coliseum**
See ya there! see p. 17



Florida Bibliophile Society
A community of book lovers

Minutes of the February 2023 Meeting of the Florida Bibliophile Society

by Gary Simons, FBS Secretary

Charles Brown opened the meeting announcing that FBS member Jude Bagatti's photography show at the Hickman Theater Lobby would be held over for the month of March. Gary Simons then announced that FBS would be staffing both a hospitality desk and an inside table or booth at the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair, March 10–12. He said that an email request for volunteers would shortly be going out to all FBS members and asked that members respond to the email indicating if they would be willing to participate in this effort and when they would be available. As a little bonus, FBS volunteers would get badges allowing them to enter the Fair for free!

Ben Wiley introduced our speaker, Irene Pavese, who was speaking on "The Evolution of Margaret Armstrong: Botanist, Illustrator, Book Designer." He noted that Irene "has worn and still wears many hats: antique store owner and manager, bookstore owner, restaurateur, social worker, book collector, antiquarian, book evaluator and appraiser. She's even studied and trained as a book binder." Irene moved to Florida in 2001, at which time she opened Book Lovers Cafe on Central Ave. in St. Pete. Irene still sells books in Gulfport Antiques and Collectables and also sells books on line. She is a volunteer with the Friends of Gulfport Library where she appraises donated books. She joined the Florida Bibliophile Society in the early 2000s and has served FBS as President and as Vice President and is now our Treasurer.

Ben noted that among Irene's many interests as a book collector is her fascination with Margaret Armstrong, a 20th-century American designer known for her book covers in Art Nouveau style. Her designs feature lots of blossoms, leaves, vines, tendrils, and flowers in bold colors and with gold stamping. These book covers are works of art in themselves and Ben pronounced Irene to be a happy owner of many of these Armstrong books, but one who is always looking to expand her collection.

Irene began her presentation saying there are more than 300 known book covers by Margaret



Irene Pavese poses with some choice selections from her collection of books with Margaret Armstrong covers. Many have interior decorations by Armstrong as well.

Armstrong. Irene has only a small fraction of these known covers. She displayed about 20 of them on a table in the front of the room. She said she first noticed Margaret Armstrong covers when she had her own bookshop, but, "unfortunately she sold many of them, and they are now harder and harder to find."

Irene structured her presentation around a series of readings from various authoritative sources on Armstrong's life and works. She began with

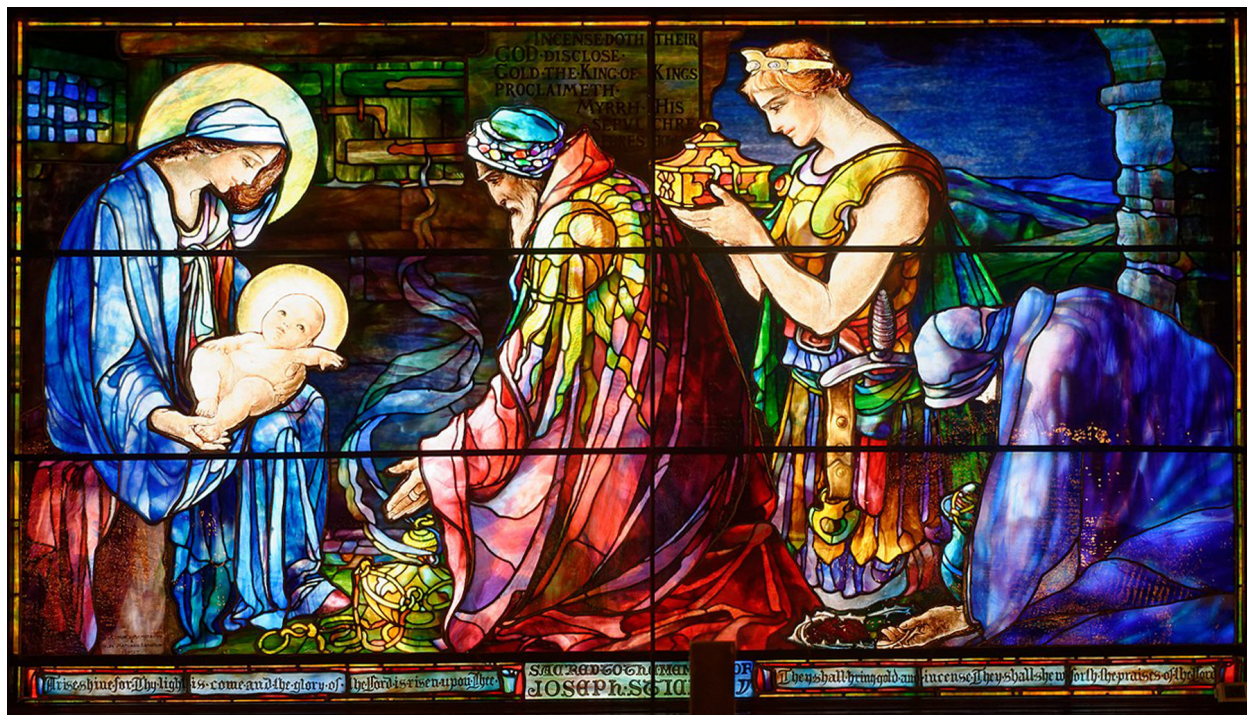
Minutes, continued

biographical information drawn from material on the Miriam Irwin Collection of Margaret Armstrong Book Design at the University of Cincinnati website:

Margaret Neilson Armstrong was born in New York on September 24, 1867, into a wealthy and artistically minded family. Her father, David Maitland Armstrong had inherited land holdings along the Hudson, and her mother Helen Neilson could claim lineage to Peter Stuyvesant, . . . As a young girl, Margaret spent five years in Italy where her father studied [stained glass and] oil painting . . . Margaret's sister Helen was born while the family was in Italy and would go on to become a well-regarded stained glass artist. Margaret and Helen collaborated on projects . . . After five years in Italy the Armstrong family returned to the United States and lived at the family estate, Danskammer, which was



Margaret Armstrong



David Maitland Armstrong, father to Margaret, Helen, and five other children, was the son of a distinguished New York family. His wife, Helen Nielson, was a descendant of Peter Stuyvesant. During the family's time in Italy, David became American consul in Rome (1869–1871), *Chargé d'Affaires* to the Papal States (1869), and Consul General in Rome (1871–1873). In 1878, David, an accomplished painter and stained glass artist, was appointed Director of American Fine Arts at the 1878 Paris Exposition

Universelle. During these years, David met many influential people, including President Ulysses S. Grant. In the 1880s, back in the U.S., David focused on stained glass, forming a company with Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge. The window shown above, installed in Faith Chapel on Jekyll Island, Georgia, is an example of their work. Daughter Helen later joined the firm and became an important stained glass artist in her own right. Daughter Margaret pursued a career in illustration.

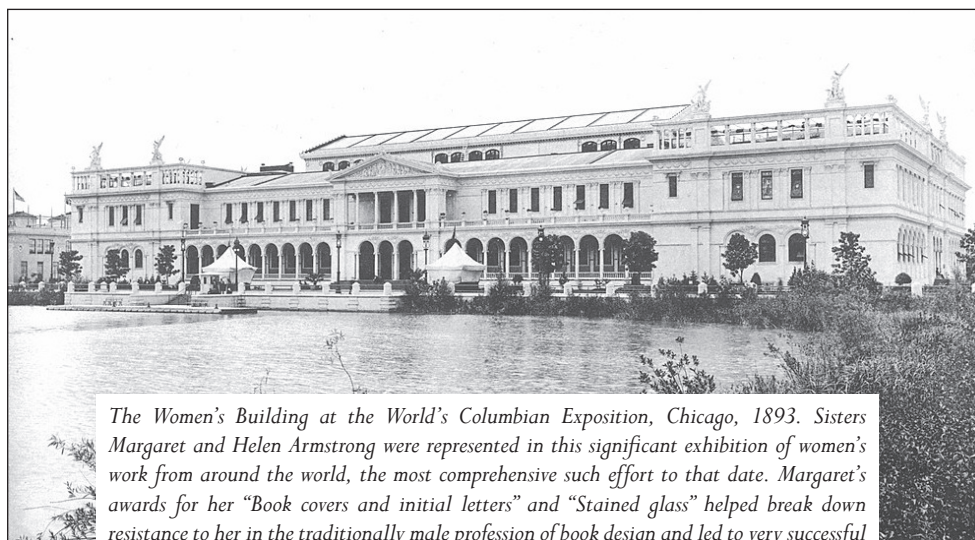
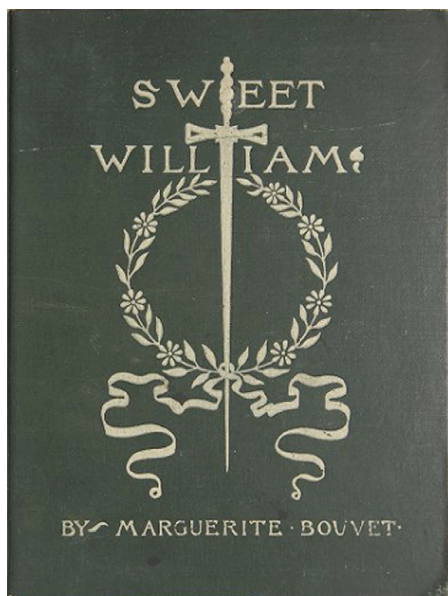
Minutes, continued

located in New York on her father's land on the northern Hudson River.

From 1872 to 1888, the Armstrong family lived at Danskammer, whose wooded surroundings likely formed Margaret's fascination with natural motifs in her later design work. According to Margaret's brother, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, "Margaret and Helen were remarkable women. As Margaret was older she got her start as an artist first, to be exact at age sixteen, when she began painting dinner cards and menus." Helen soon followed, even though neither sister had much formal training in art. In 1890, Margaret's first book cover was published in Chicago by the firm A. C. McClurg. Margaret and Helen's first publicly recognized collaboration was the design for Marguerite Bouvet's novel *Sweet William*, which was credited to them

by name on the title page. . . . This was an accomplishment as the decorative arts at the turn of the century were still considered a man's field. Often, this influenced Margaret to use the name M. N. Armstrong when submitting her sample works. Despite the difficulties for women in the design field, in 1892, the Armstrong sisters' work was featured in the Women's Building of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and both won awards.

Irene noted that Margaret Armstrong is best known for her designs on dark blue cloth for the Henry van Dyke books, and she showed us some early and late examples, both featuring gold lettering and floral motifs. Although some consider this series of books Armstrong's most impressive achievement, Irene added her own "maybe not." Nevertheless, she has about a dozen of these books but is still



The Women's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. Sisters Margaret and Helen Armstrong were represented in this significant exhibition of women's work from around the world, the most comprehensive such effort to that date. Margaret's awards for her "Book covers and initial letters" and "Stained glass" helped break down resistance to her in the traditionally male profession of book design and led to very successful career in book and book cover design. Helen was also recognized for her designs in "Calendars and illustrations," including two designs for stained glass windows.



A few of the 20+ covers that Armstrong designed for Henry van Dyke books, including, at the left, the famous gold-stamped covers on blue cloth

Minutes, continued

looking for others in the series. Armstrong's other most identifiable collection of works is the covers for Myrtle Reed which feature lavender cloth and brightly colored inks. Irene stated that she has quite a few of these books, which stand out for their unconventionally light colors and feminine design features.

Once more quoting from material taken from the Miriam Irwin Collection—University of Cincinnati, Irene noted that

between the years of 1908 to 1913, Armstrong was designing as few as five covers per year. This coincided with her newest project of assembling a book of wildflowers of the western United States. In 1915, Armstrong completed *The Field Book of Western Wild Flowers*. [Unfortunately, Irene does not have that volume, as available copies tend to be "pricey" or in poor condition.] Upon

completion of the field book, Armstrong began to edit and design works for her father and brother as well as contribute regularly to noteworthy magazines of the time. In her sixties, Margaret wrote two biographies and in her seventies, she wrote three successful mystery novels.

Irene showed us copies of the biographies, one of Fanny Kemble and one of Edward John Trelawny. She is still "holding out" for good copies of the mysteries.

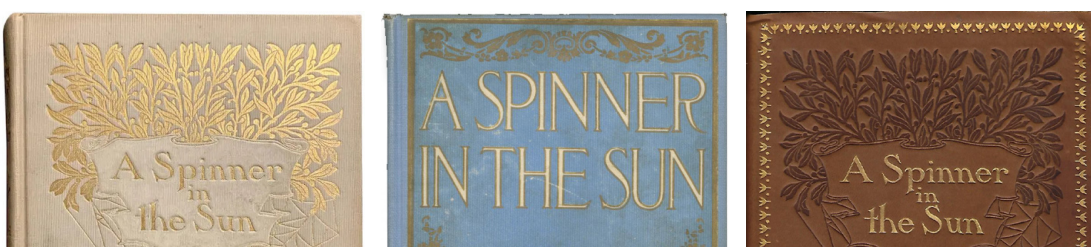
Turning to another source, Irene read to us from an article describing an exhibition, "Printed Flower Gardens: The Bookbindings of Margaret Armstrong," which was published under the auspices of the Rare Book School:

[The exhibition] focused on her development over the more than 35-year period (1890–1926) in which she was active as a book artist."



Armstrong covers for Myrtle Reed (1874–1911), a prolific and bestselling Chicago writer of both fiction and nonfiction. Old Gold and Silver was first issued in a different color but reissued to match the popular lavender editions of Reed's books. The author ended her life at 36, four years into a marriage that seemed ideal on the outside but which Reed found unhappy. In *Threads of Grey and Gold* (1902) she recorded the epigram "The only way to test a man is to marry him. If you live, it's a mushroom. If you die, it's a toadstool." She was the daughter of Elizabeth Armstrong Reed (no relation to Margaret), a successful writer and scholar of Hindu and Persian literature.

Variant covers — Myrtle Reed's novels were very popular, which meant multiple printings. It was common for these books to be printed in a variety of colors and designs. Compare these covers for *A Spinner in the Sun* with the one shown above. All are credited to Margaret Armstrong.



Minutes, continued

Rare Book School's holdings of Margaret Armstrong (MA) bindings have increased slowly but significantly over the years . . . In 2001, our MA collection doubled, thanks to the generosity of Linda M. Wilson, who presented us with her notable collection of more than 300 Margaret Armstrong bindings. Linda Wilson's gift was especially noteworthy because of the exceptionally fine condition of the books in her collection, enabling a view of MA's work fairly close to what the first purchasers of these books would have seen, more than three quarters of a century ago. . . . MA's work – particularly the floral designs in each period of her career – reveals her lifelong interest in botany, particularly in the study of American wildflowers. She began to pursue this interest in earnest after 1910, when her cover design work began to dry up: elaborately stamped cloth bindings had begun

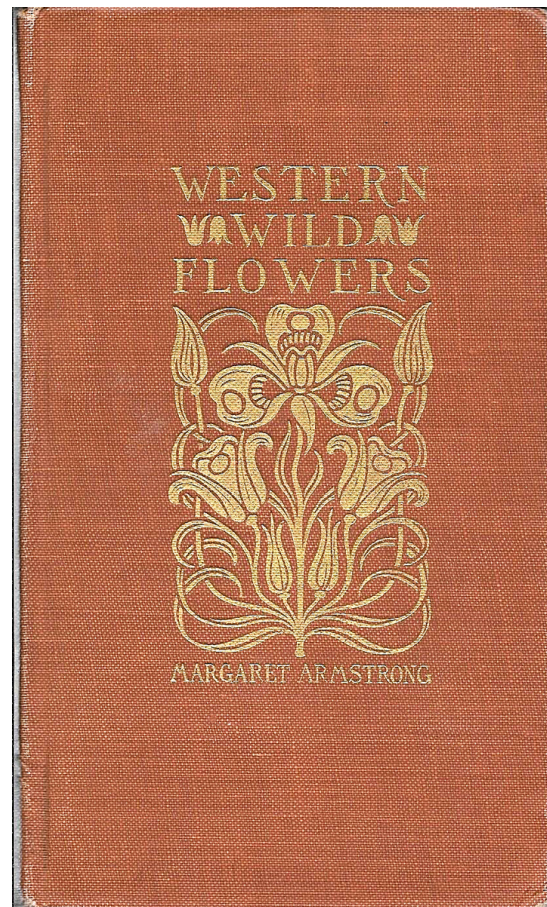
to be replaced by colorful paper dust jackets (which were much cheaper to produce). From 1911–1914, she and a few female friends traveled all over the western United States camping and sightseeing while she completed the detailed research that would become her *Field Book of Western Wild Flowers*. The group was hardy and adventurous by any standard; a 1912 article MA wrote for *Overland Monthly* describes their trip to the Grand Canyon. They were the first white women ever to reach the bottom of the canyon, where MA discovered several new species of wildflowers.

MA continued to design book covers through the mid-1920s, though after 1915 most of her work was either for her own books or continuations of series she had started at the turn of the century.

The Delaware Art Museum had an online exhibition entitled "The Cover Sells the Book: Transformations



Margaret Armstrong with a pack of donkeys during her descent into the Grand Canyon.



Minutes, continued

in *Commercial Book Publishing 1860–1920*,” which provided additional information:

Armstrong created a strong visual identity for individual authors, making them easily recognizable for the consumer. The dark blue book cloth for the works of Henry van Dyke, and lavender for those of Myrtle Reed, made their work easily identifiable at a quick glance. Armstrong was able to accommodate the important marketing tool of brand identity while maintaining high quality design.

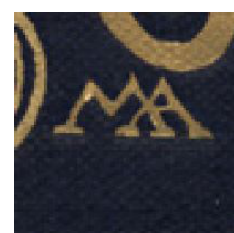
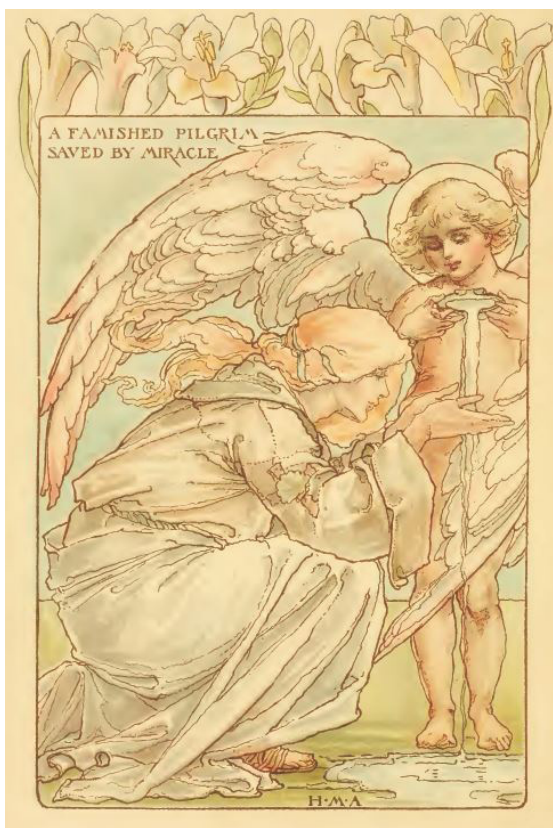
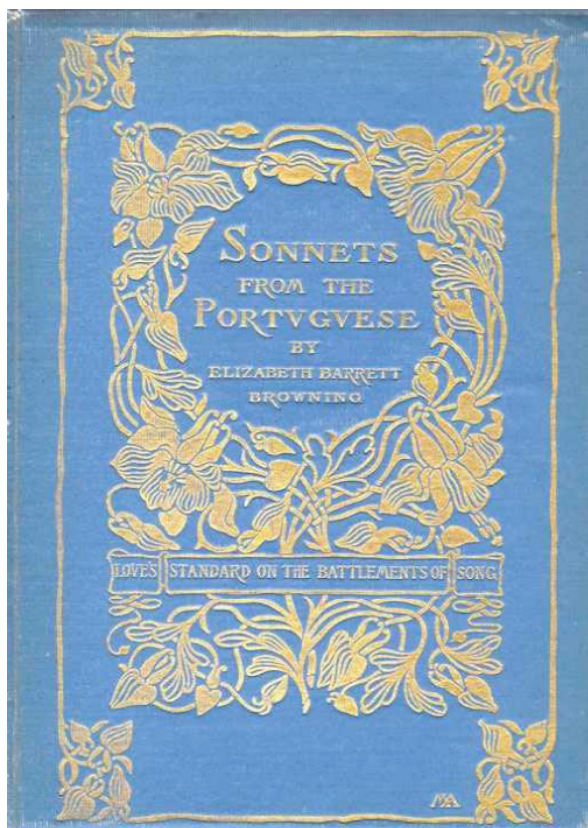
Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Margaret’s brother, wrote of her work, “she started a vogue for making the book covers themselves artistic and distinctive, and her covers became a sort of identity tag for the author. Whenever I see the dark blue and gold design on the spine of some book on a library shelf I have recognized it as Henry van Dyke’s even before Margaret’s

distinctive lettering tells me so.

Regarding his sister’s designs for Myrtle Reed’s books, Hamilton Fish Armstrong wrote, “In most cases, she could follow her own wishes, but occasionally was called upon to match her style to that of the author, which might be terrible. Thus the saccharin mauve cover which she devised for the first Myrtle Reed novel was so exactly right that she had to perpetuate it with variations through all the rest of that immensely popular and long-forgotten author’s string of works.”

Drawing upon a posting on the New York Botanical Garden website on Margaret Armstrong, Irene told us that

[In] 1895 she established her stylized signature “M. A.” Prior to that, she had not always signed her designs.



Sonnets from the Portuguese with cover and interior illustrations and decorations by Margaret Armstrong. The frontispiece (center) is signed “HMA.” Every page is decorated with floral designs in one of the fullest realizations of Armstrong’s Art Nouveau style.

In 1895, Armstrong began marking her cover designs with initials like other book cover designers such as Amy Richards, Adrian Iorio, and Alice C. Morse.

Minutes, concluded

Her book design work slowed in 1907, which some attribute to the introduction of paper book jackets, and others attribute to her wanting to work on her own projects instead of continuing to design for others.

[While researching *Western Wild Flowers*], she collected and pressed over 1,000 specimens, some of them being species new to science. One hundred eighty-eight of them are in the herbarium at NYBG. In 1986, her niece donated 52 of her original line drawings for this book to NYBG. Some of these drawings indicate the date and the location where they were produced. In total, she produced 500 black-and-white drawings and 48 watercolors. The watercolors are held by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

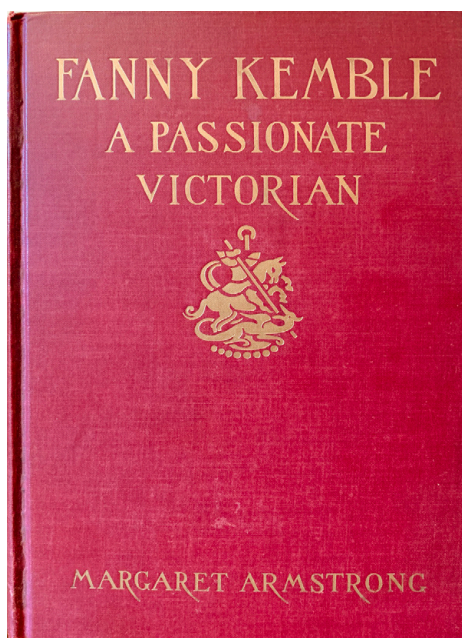
Armstrong continued to produce both art and text for the remainder of her life, notably

authoring the three mystery novels *Murder in Stained Glass* (1939), *The Man With No Face* (1940), and *The Blue Santo Murder Mystery* (1940). After a short illness, she died in 1944 in New York City, at the age of 76.

Irene then read some comments from a review and commentary on a Margaret Armstrong mystery, *Murder in Stained Glass*.

After reading from these distinguished sources, Irene passed out copies of her Margaret Armstrong books to the attendees. This “touchy, feely” part of her presentation was greeted with many “oohs and aahs” – it was fun to actually touch these books, feel the textures of the covers, see the covers up-close, and look for the sometimes hard to find “MA” signature embedded in many of the cover designs.

For all of us, the presentation was a delightful and informative primer on Margaret Armstrong and her works.

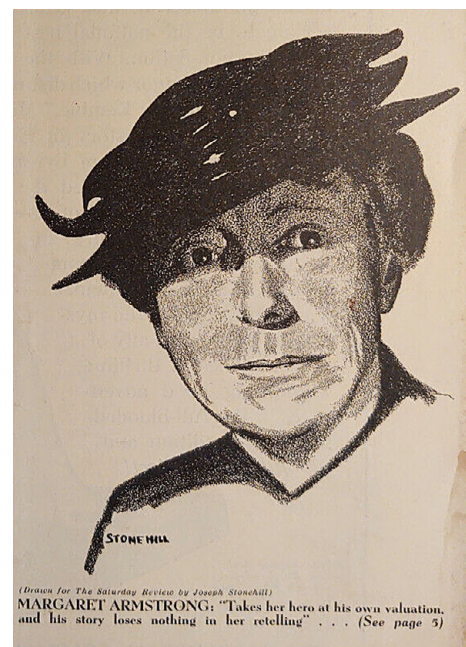


Frances Anne “Fanny” Kemble (1809–1893) was a British actress from a theatre family in the early and mid-19th century. She was a well-known and popular writer and abolitionist whose published works included plays, poetry, eleven volumes of memoirs, travel writing, and works about the theatre. —Wikipedia

Miss Armstrong has described her in a very readable and sympathetic fashion. —The Atlantic, Oct. 1938



When the remains of temperamental artist, Frederick Ullathorne, are found in his own fiery kiln it looks like a ghastly murder has been committed. But with only a few bones as evidence the local police are getting nowhere fast. Can Miss Trumbull pick up the clues that the police are missing? Or will her interfering get her into trouble in more ways than one? —Goodreads



In 1940, Margaret Armstrong appeared on the cover of The Saturday Review. The issue included a favorable review of her just-published biography Trelawney. Edward John Trelawny (1792–1881) was a biographer, novelist, and adventurer best known for his friendship with the Romantic poets Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron.



The Florida Bibliophile Society
extends warm wishes to our Irish and American-Irish colleagues
who have contributed to the history and longevity of the book.

St Patrick's Day, March 17
honors writers, scholars, teachers, students, collectors, printers, publishers,
booksellers, actors, and visual artists associated with the Emerald Isle
and her proud pantheon of writers.



Folio 129v, Four Evangelists, **The Book of Kells**. 8th Century A.D. Trinity College Dublin. 340 folios (680 leaves) on vellum (calfskin), 4 vols. (1953 binding). 330 x 250 mm. In Latin. Though primarily a religious illuminated manuscript of the Four Gospels, **The Book of Kells** is an iconic treasure in Western literature and a fine example of medieval Celtic book design & the visual arts (Christian symbolism/Celtic motifs). Why, 'tis so lavish & extraordinary, some fancy it the work of angels. < [Video](#), Exhibition of TCD MS 58 >

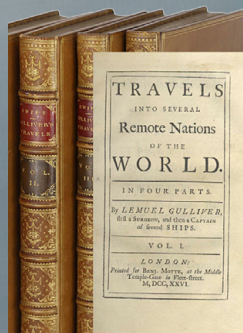
Contributed by Maureen E. Mulvihill & Charles M. Brown.

A Legacy of Irish Literature: 300 Years of Writings & Writers

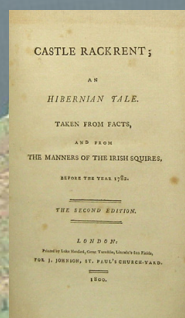
Selections, M. E. Mulvihill; Design/Installation, C. M. Brown

1700

Jonathan Swift



Maria Edgeworth

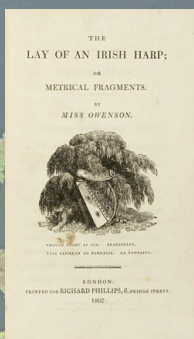


Mary Tighe

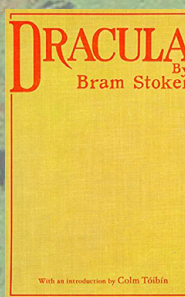


1800

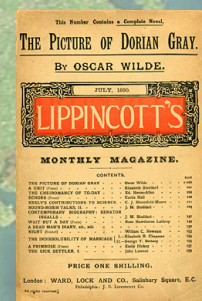
Sydney, Lady Morgan



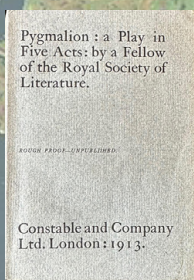
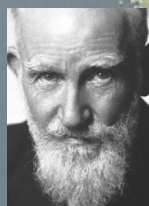
Bram Stoker



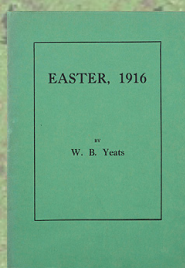
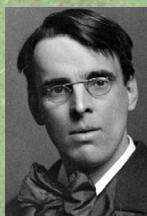
Oscar Wilde



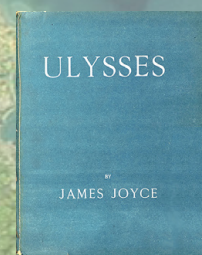
G. B. Shaw



W. B. Yeats

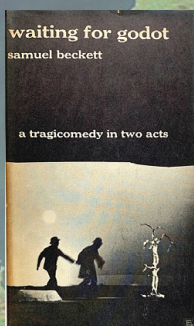
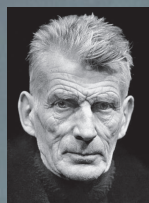


James Joyce

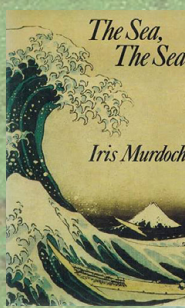


1900

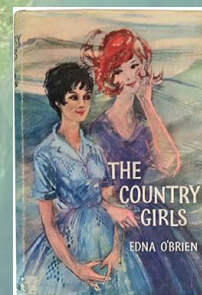
Samuel Beckett



Iris Murdoch

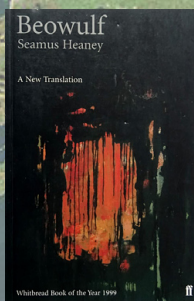
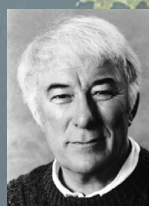


Edna O'Brien

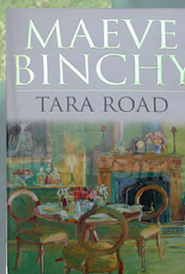


2000

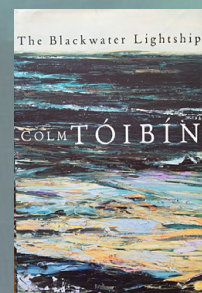
Seamus Heaney



Maev Binchy



Colm Tóibín



Selected Irish Writers

By Charles M. Brown

Irish literature has made a profound impact, both on the nation itself and on the world.

Here are highlights from a historical range of Ireland's most accomplished writers, poets, and playwrights. Ideally, this is a handy overview of Irish genres, forms, and themes which have had a lasting impact on world literature and its readers. The following pages offer details of the authors and works displayed on page 10.

Looking for something to read? This is a great place to start!



Jonathan Swift (1667–1745)

Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships ("Gulliver's Travels"; 1726)

This satiric masterpiece is the best-known, full-length work by the Anglo-Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift. It is one of his many anonymous narratives. In *Travels*, Swift satirizes both human nature and the "traveller's tales," a popular genre in the 1600s and 1700s when European exploration and colonization dominated the known world. Swift claimed that he wrote *Travels* "to vex the world rather than divert it." The novel was an instant success. English dramatist John Gay remarked: "It is universally read, from the cabinet council to the nursery"; and it continues to appear on lists of the world's greatest books. The characters of Gulliver, the Lilliputians, and the Yahoos have provided rich metaphors for some 300 years.



Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849)

Castle Rackrent; An Hibernian Tale (1800)

Through steward Thady Quirk, this novel is about four generations of Rackrents: dissipated spendthrift

Sir Patrick O'Shaughlin; litigious Sir Murtagh Rackrent; cruel husband and gambler Sir Kit Rackrent; and the generous but improvident Sir Condry Rackrent. Despite their misdeeds, the narrator's son Jason Quirk manages to keep the estate afloat.

Castle Rackrent is sometimes regarded as the first historical novel; the first regional novel in English; the first Anglo-Irish novel; the first Big House novel; and the first saga novel! W. B. Yeats described it as "one of the most inspired chronicles written in English." Sir Walter Scott, who knew Edgeworth, credited her novel as the seed of his Waverley novels.



Mary Tighe (1772–1810)

Psyche; or, The Legend of Love (1805)

Tighe, a gifted young writer from Co. Wicklow, retells and adapts the

ancient love story of the mortal Psyche and the god Cupid. Ordered to destroy the beautiful Psyche, Cupid instead falls in love, but cannot reveal himself. When Psyche discovers his identity, she is sent on a journey of unusual encounters. Writing at the dawn of the Romantic era, Tighe places Cupid and Psyche on more equal footing. Notably, Cupid accompanies Psyche in her wanderings. *Psyche* was published in an edition of 50 in 1805, the only one of many works she published. The book shown on the previous page is a rare 1805 edition, beautifully bound for presentation. Tighe died in 1810 from tuberculosis, but a number of her works were published the following year, establishing her reputation as an important pre-Romantic writer. Scholars have shown her influence in John Keats.

Irish literature, continued



Sydney, Lady Morgan (née Owenson; 1781–1859)

The Lay of an Irish Harp; or, Metrical Fragments (1807)

In the years 1805–1807, Owenson wrote *Twelve Original Hibernian Melodies* (1805), *The Wild Irish Girl: a National Tale* (1806), and *The Lay of an English Harp* (1807). These works were strongly influenced by her upbringing by her father, an Irish patriot, who ran a theatre which often featured nationalist themes. In the late 1700s, the harp was being used as a symbol of Irish nationhood. Owenson's works also used the harp, often personifying it, as well as the image of "a harp-playing young woman as the spokeswoman of her nation" to create "a new kind of Ireland-related fiction: the 'national tale'." In London, Sydney often adopted the persona of her main character from *The Wild Irish Girl*, Glorvina. The book was a hit in England and America. In recent years, Owenson has been appreciated for her originality and candor.



Bram Stoker (1847–1912)

Dracula (1897)

Though the idea of the vampire had existed for millennia and had been commodified on commercial markets by John Polidori's *The Vampyre* (1819), Stoker's *Dracula* became the foundation for a vast mythos of grisly, gothic narratives. A classic of the horror genre, the book's basic themes, the undying vampire, the lust for blood, sexual transgressiveness, and female victimization, have fueled hundreds of books and films.

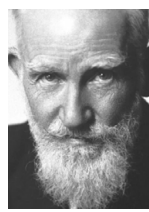
Stoker researched the novel extensively, producing 100 pages of notes and outlines (which have their own interesting history). The main character was destined to be a count early in Stoker's thinking. Many theories have been proposed for the origin of the name "Dracula." But it appears that a trip to a library in Whitby, a seaside town in Yorkshire, is where Stoker found the name "Dracula," perhaps believing it to be the Romanian word for "devil."



Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)

The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891)

The Picture of Dorian Gray, Wilde's only novel, was first published as the first 100 pages of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, June 1890, in both the U.S. and England. The book's focus on hedonism was concerning to the editor, who removed about 500 words referring to homosexuality and Gray's lovers. (The unabridged novella was not published until 2011.) Wilde expanded the story from 13 to 20 chapters for the book, which was published in 1891. The basic story concerns a handsome young man whose portrait is painted by a friend. As the young man adopts an increasingly hedonistic lifestyle, he sells his soul in a deal by which the portrait will age and he will remain young. For the book, Wilde wrote a preface to address criticisms of the magazine version and explained the book's philosophical foundations regarding art and beauty.



George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

Pygmalion (1913)

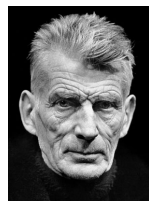
For several decades, Shaw was a leading playwright, writing more than 60 plays, including *Man and Superman* (1902), *Pygmalion* (1913), and *Saint Joan* (1923). In 1925, Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. *Pygmalion* is his most popular and enduring play, inspiring dozens of adaptations for film and stage. Shaw borrowed the story from ancient Greek mythology in which a sculptor falls in love with his creation and it comes to life. Shaw updated the story and gave it a New Woman, feminist twist: the creation, Liza Doolittle, now a changed person, walks away from her "sculptor" to take charge of her own life and its new possibilities. The ending was a source of contention because many viewers would have preferred a "Hollywood ending" in which the two marry. Shaw, never shy of battle, defended the play from these attacks.

Irish literature, continued**William Butler Yeats (1865–1939)*****Easter, 1916* (1916)**

On Easter, April 24, 1916, Irish republicans rose up against the British with the aim of establishing an independent Irish republic. The uprising was suppressed, and most of the organizers were executed for treason. Yeats's poem expresses his mixed emotions about the Easter Rising – torn between his commitment to Irish independence and the means to accomplishing it (talk or “bloody mayhem”). This ambivalence put him at odds with a number of republican leaders. The 80-line poem “Easter, 1916” was published privately in 1916, a few months after the Rising, in an edition of just 25 copies. It was published in several magazines in 1920 and in Yeats's 1920 book of poems, *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. The date of the uprising is coded in the lines of the poem: 16 lines in stanzas 1 and 3 for the year; four stanzas for the month; and 24 lines in stanzas 2 and 4 for the day.

**James Joyce (1882–1941)*****Ulysses* (1922)**

Each year, on June 16, Joyceans and lovers of literature celebrate Bloomsday in honor of the publication of *Ulysses*. The book documents a day in the life of Leopold Bloom on June 16, 1904, in Dublin. The book became a foundation for modernist literature with a narration that dwells inside Bloom's head to an extent never before realized. It can be challenging to read, it is long, it is full of Joycean wordplay, and frank about sexuality. It was immediately controversial, and Joyce had difficulties finding a publisher. Part of it was serialized, and the full book was published by Sylvia Beach in Paris in 1922. This brave action led to sensational court battles under U.S. obscenity laws. *Ulysses* won, and it is one of the most famous and important books of the 20th century, opening a door to free expression for writers, publishers, and readers.

**Samuel Beckett (1906–1989)*****Waiting for Godot* (1953)**

Two men wait two and half hours for a third man to arrive. [Spoiler!] He never does. This is the basic action of *Waiting for Godot*, and yet it is one of the most famous and important plays of the 20th century and part of reason that Beckett received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1969. In the play, the two main characters Vladimir (Didi) and Estragon (Gogo) have discussions and interact with a couple of passers-by. Written at the height of the Cold War when much was still broken from World War II, the play is a long rumination on purpose and purposelessness. The play is probably the most famous example of the Theatre of the Absurd which used unconventional, sometimes confusing, means to engage audiences. *Waiting for Godot* shocked its opening-night audience. Nonetheless, it has been produced many times. Its wit, humor, and relevance always shine through.

**Iris Murdoch (1919–1999)*****The Sea, The Sea* (1978)**

Murdoch was highly regarded. This novel was the 19th of over two dozen novels written by Murdoch, and it won the 1978 Booker Prize. (She also wrote plays, poetry, and nonfiction.) In this novel, a theatre director has retired to the seaside where he encounters his first love, now much older and not immediately recognizable. His prodigious creative energies idealize the relationship to the point where he becomes obsessed, going to extreme and comical lengths to make fantasy come true. In 1979, Rosemary Dinnage wrote in the *New York Review of Books*: “All the Murdoch sleight-of-hand is ... here: exotic scene-setting, intricate patterns of coincidence and relationship, ambivalent sexual currents, a seemingly unlimited supply of plot that keeps one ... prepared to read on for the sake of keeping up with the next move in the game.”

Irish literature, concluded**Edna O'Brien (1930–)*****The Country Girls* (Trilogy, 1960–1964)**

The Country Girls (1960), *The Lonely Girl* (1962), and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964) comprise the trilogy. The books follow two childhood friends, Caithleen (Cait/Kate) and Bridget (Baba) as they come of age, find their way in the world, and work through relationships, including their own. In many hands, this would describe pleasant, if sometimes troubled, material. O'Brien broke the taboos of her era and explored sexual and social matters frankly. Her books were banned in Ireland, where she was widely criticized for her content and her unflattering picture of Ireland. Nevertheless, international reception was very positive, and *The Country Girls* became a watershed for Irish women writers. One writer praised her for surviving and wondered how many other women writers had been crushed by these forces.

**Seamus Heaney (1939–2013)*****Beowulf* (1999)**

Heaney is widely recognized as one of the major poets of the 20th century, with over 20 volumes of poetry and criticism and editor of several more. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995. *Beowulf* is a poem that exists in one manuscript about 1,000 years old. It is certainly the most widely known Old English poem and has been translated many times. Like any translation, transferring its culture and poetics authentically is a great challenge, and translators make trade-offs between representing concepts, rhythms, and sound systems faithfully or making the text more intelligible to a modern reader. Heaney's translation was widely praised for making *Beowulf* available to new audiences, in accessible language that was also well-tuned poetically for our time. One scholar advises that Heaney's translation should be read aloud to appreciate the delicate balance he has struck.

**Maeve Binchy (1939–2012)*****Tara Road* (1998)**

Two women, one from Ireland and one from America, trade houses without ever having met. This could be the formula for a reality show, but in *Tara Road*, it is a full exploration of the lives of two women who seek to escape shocking changes to their lives and how they learn about themselves in the process. The book was widely praised, and some felt that among Binchy's many very successful books, this one was the finest. Binchy's novels "are characterised by a sympathetic and often humorous portrayal of small-town life in Ireland, and surprise endings."

A moving story rendered with the deft touch of a master artisan, *Tara Road* is Maeve Binchy at her very best – utterly beautiful, hauntingly unforgettable, entirely original, and wholly enjoyable. —*Goodreads*

**Colm Tóibín (1955–)*****The Blackwater Lightship* (1999)**

Tóibín published his first novel in 1990. Since then his work has garnered many awards. He has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize twice (*Blackwater Lightship* and *The Master*), won the 2006 International Dublin Literary Award, the Hawthornden Prize, the Folio Prize, and the David Cohen Prize in 2021. *The Blackwater Lightship* takes place in Dublin and County Wexford. It is told from the point of view of Helen, a successful school principal living with her husband and two children in Ireland. She learns that her brother has had AIDS for years and never told her. He wants her to break the news to their mother and grandmother, but for Helen, who has little contact with the two women, this means confronting longstanding barriers and pain. The three women are forced to confront and overcome these issues for the sake of their brother, son, and grandson.



At Auction: Codex Sassoon – The Oldest Complete Hebrew Bible

Bibles are so ubiquitous that it's hard to imagine a time when they were scarce—or didn't quite exist. "Bible" here refers to the collection of writings in the Judeo-Christian tradition regarded as authoritative or "divinely inspired" that believers may use as foundations for life and practice. The word "bible" itself has come into the language to refer to any singular, authoritative text.

In this article, "Bible" refers to collected writings from the Jewish tradition or from any of several Christian traditions. The writings that form the Jewish (more properly Hebrew) Bible precede the Christian writings, but they are incorporated into the Christian Bible as the Old Testament. The New Testament of the Christian Bible is a record of events that occurred in the first century CE that are related to the life of Jesus and the activities of his twelve apostles.

For both the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Bible, the content is not a single narrative but a collection of shorter works called "books," composed in a wide range of literary forms. The Hebrew Bible has 24 books grouped into three categories: *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). The entire book is referred to as "Tanakh," an acronym made from the first letter of each of the groups. The Old Testament comprises 39 books. This is the number in the Old Testament used by Protestant Christians, and it represents the same material as the Hebrew Bible, but divided differently and in a different order. It is important to realize that "Hebrew Bible" and "Old Testament" are not synonymous. Catholic and Orthodox Christians include additional material so that Catholic Old Testaments include seven more books and Orthodox Old Testaments include ten more.



At 12 by 14 inches and 26 pounds, the Sassoon Codex is a large book. It was rebound in the 20th century in simple brown leather, and most of the folios are like those shown above: three columns of carefully written, checked, and revised Hebrew.

Codex Sassoon, continued

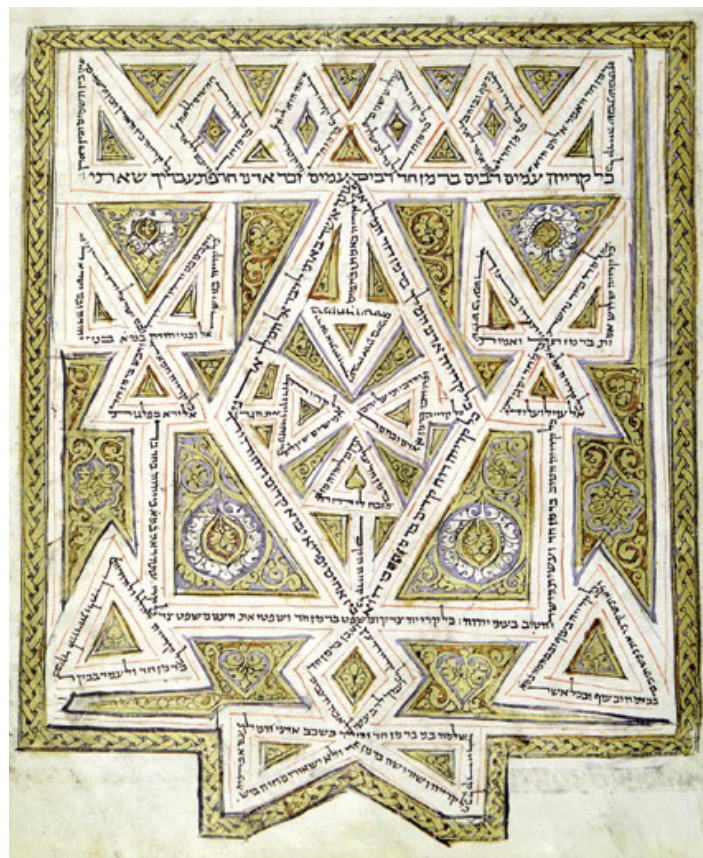
The characters, images, events, and concepts in the Hebrew and Christian Bibles are part of the fabric of Western civilization. From Adam and Eve to the Apocalypse, these Bibles provided the background of much of Western literature for centuries.

Scholars believe that the writings in the Hebrew Bible go back to the 9th and 10th centuries BCE. However, the earliest, very fragmentary evidence for these writings occurs on amulets dated to the 7th century BCE. Significant manuscript evidence is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 at Qumran and dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries BCE. More complete collections of the Hebrew Bible occur in Greek, Syriac, and Latin, from the 3rd century BCE to the 5th century CE.

The events of the Christian writings, gathered as the New Testament, occurred in the 1st century BCE, but the earliest manuscript of these writings is a business-card-sized fragment of the Gospel of John from the 2nd century CE. The first manuscript of a complete book of the New Testament comes from around 200 CE, and the earliest complete copy of the New Testament comes from the 4th century CE.

For each of the religious groups mentioned above, establishment of a definitive text was a long and contentious process, closely bound to doctrinal conflicts. For the Hebrew Bible, this struggle had an additional dimension because a core belief was that the words of the Hebrew Bible were given by God, and therefore precision was paramount. This led to the development of the Masoretic text beginning the 6th century CE, the official text of the Hebrew Bible, from the books included and their order down to the diacritical marks (*massora*) on the letters of the text and marks specifying pronunciation. During the many centuries when transmission of the text was accomplished through hand copying by scribes, an absolutely accurate master copy was essential.

The same is true for the Quran, which Muslims believe is the direct revelation of God to Mohammed and therefore, must be transmitted,



"Carpet page" from the Aleppo Codex. Carpet pages are characteristic of many medieval manuscripts, including bibles in the Hebrew and Christian traditions and the Quran. As here, they usually involve elaborate geometric designs interlaced with text written in very small characters. The text may be devotional, or it may be related to the document's production. Carpet pages are also present in the Aleppo Codex and the Codex Sassoon.

either by scribes or in print with the utmost accuracy. The Quran often cites the Hebrew Bible, but it is an independent revelation, and therefore, Muslims would not see the Hebrew Bible as a predecessor to the Quran the way Christians see the New Testament as continuous with tradition and narrative of the Hebrew Bible.

The earliest manuscripts of the Masoretic text date to around the 9th century CE. Just after this time, three complete manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible were created that are known today: the Aleppo Codex, the Leningrad Codex, and the Sassoon Codex. The Aleppo Codex is now in the Shrine of the Book at the Israel Museum. The Leningrad Codex is in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad). The Sassoon Codex will be auctioned by Sotheby's in New York on May 16, 2023.

The Aleppo Codex was created around 920 CE



Codex Sassoon, continued

in Tiberias, a city on the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. The Hebrew Bible in the Masoretic tradition was held at the Central Synagogue of Aleppo (Syria) for five centuries. During anti-Jewish riots in 1947, in the aftermath of the U.N. decision to partition Palestine, the codex was damaged by fire. It is not clear what happened to the codex after that, but it reappeared in Israel in 1958; however, almost 200 of the original 487 leaves (folios) were missing. It was believed that they had been destroyed in the fire, but stories of the reappearance of some missing leaves have led to speculation that the missing part still exists. This story of high stakes international intrigue is the basis of a book, *The Aleppo Codex* (2013) by Matti Friedman.

The Leningrad Codex was created in Cairo in 1008–1009 CE; its colophon is dated. Scholars differ in their opinions about how the Aleppo Codex and the Leningrad Codex are related. The Leningrad Codex is not as old as the Aleppo Codex, but it is more complete. The Leningrad Codex was kept in Cairo for a number of centuries, but in the early 1800s it was found among 1,500 handwritten books and documents collected by the Crimean collector Abraham Firkovich (1787–1874). The codex was brought to Odessa in 1838 and later to the Imperial Library in St. Petersburg. Firkovich left no records of where the codex was acquired.

The Sassoon Codex has been carbon dated to the years 880–940 CE. It is not known where it was created, but likely in the vicinity of Syria. There is manuscript documentation of a sale in the 11th century from Khalaf ben Abraham to Isaac ben Ezekiel al-Attar. Ezekiel's two sons inherited the codex, and in the 13th century it was dedicated to the synagogue of Makisin (site of modern Markada,

Syria). Makisin was destroyed around 1400. The codex was rescued by Salama ibn Abi al-Fakhr, with the intention of returning it when the synagogue was rebuilt, but it never was, and for 500 years, the codex's whereabouts were unknown.

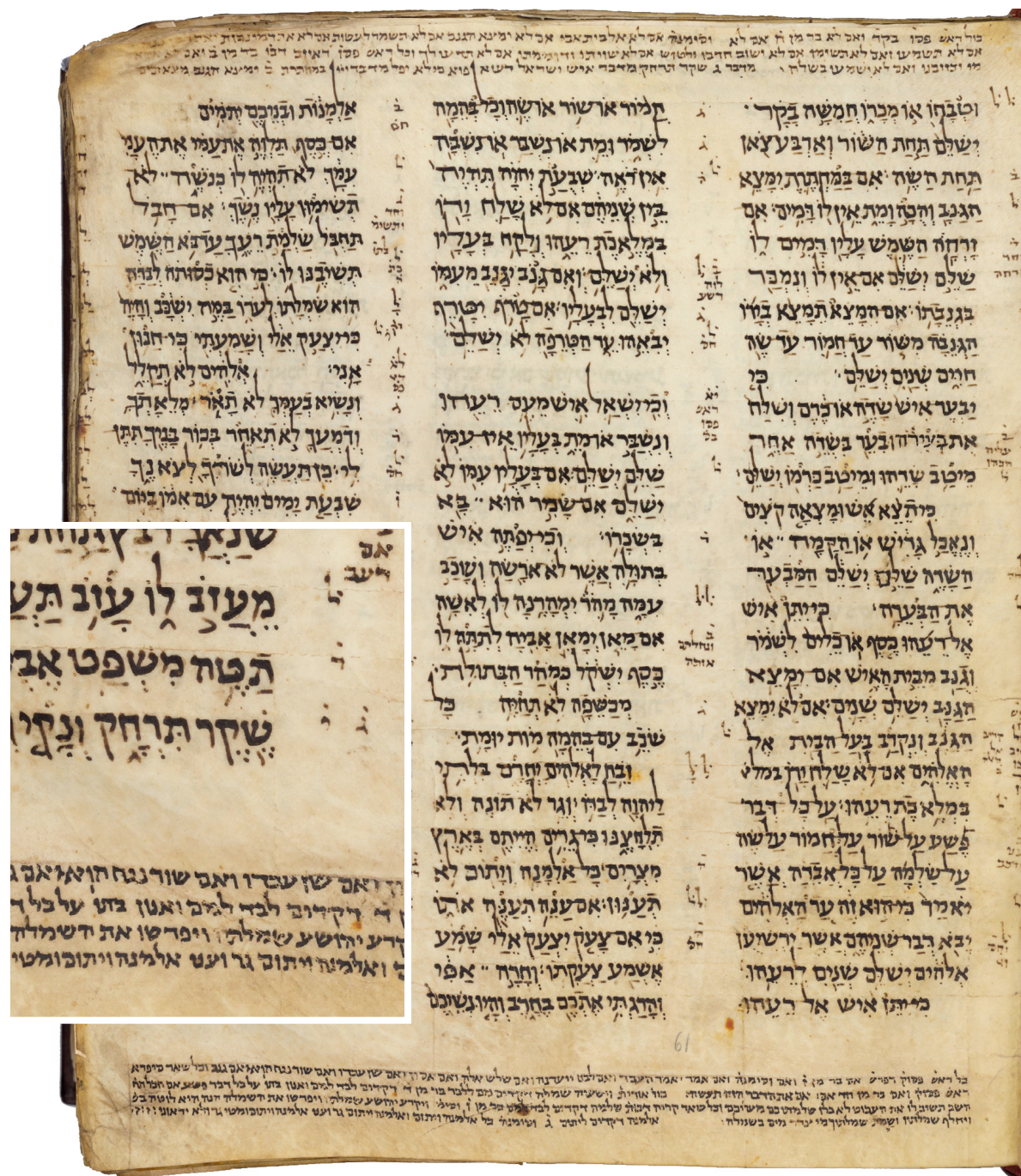
The codex turned up in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1929, where it was acquired by bibliophile David Solomon Sassoon, reportedly for £350. With roots in Baghdad, Bombay, and London, Sassoon traveled widely collecting Hebrew manuscripts. The range of works in his collection makes it one of "history's most important libraries of Judaica manuscripts." His son, Solomon David Sassoon, followed in his footsteps and kept the codex until 1978, when it was purchased at auction by the British Rail Pension Fund for \$320,000. In 1989, it was auctioned again. The broker who bought sold it Geneva banker Jaqui Safra for \$3.19 million.

The Sassoon Codex was displayed briefly in 1982. Sotheby's has given the book significant exposure in advance of the auction in a series of exhibitions across three continents: London, Tel Aviv, Dallas, Los Angeles and New York City.

The codex is estimated to draw a selling price between \$30–50 million. *Smithsonian* reports that Sotheby's spent two years arriving at this estimate. If the codex sells at the top of this range, it will be the highest price ever paid for a historic document. The current record is \$43.2 million, paid for a first printing of the U.S. Constitution in November 2021. Next is the Codex Leicester, a collection of Leonardo da Vinci's scientific writings, purchased by Bill Gates in 1994 for \$30.8 million.

It is not known why Safra is selling the codex, but it appears he has reason enough.

Codex Sassoon, concluded



A full page from the Sassoon Codex shows the structure of a typical page. The three main columns carry the biblical text. Because the Hebrew alphabet, like Arabic, does not have vowels, the vowels must be marked with symbols above and below the main letters (see enlargement). Additional marks are added to indicate precise pronunciation. Between the columns are notes on writing variants, frequency of particular words, and comments about variant readings. These notes are called masorah parva. At the top and bottom of the page is another system of notes called masorah magna. These notes are lists of passages from the biblical text that provide cross-references to writing variants, phrases, or other unusual characteristics of the text.

Look for FBS at the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair!

The Florida Antiquarian Book Fair is right around the corner! March 10–12 at the St. Petersburg Coliseum.

The Florida Bibliophile Society will once again be an active participant in the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair with a hospitality table at the entrance where we will greet visitors, hold parcels, and provide information – including information about the Florida Bibliophile Society! On Sunday, we'll be providing free book evaluations – always popular.

Plus, we will have our own booth in the fair with displays and handouts about FBS. Our “inside” table at last year’s fair was a big success, and we look forward to it again this year.

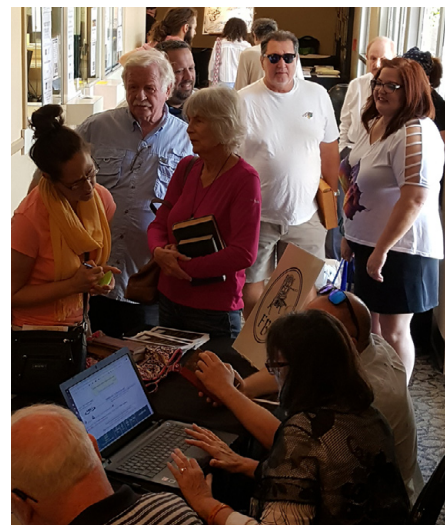
Thanks in advance to all the FBS members that volunteer to make all this work! See ya there!



St. Pete Coliseum all set up for the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair and ready for shoppers!



Carl Nudi greets a guest at the FBS booth.



Book Fair guests line up for book evaluations.

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March 10-12, 2023

FRIDAY
SATURDAY
SUNDAY

EVENT LOCATION
The Coliseum • 535 Fourth Avenue North
St Petersburg




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Books in Brief

Reminders of the Day: A Bookshop Diary

Shaun Bythell

David R. Godine

376 pp., December 2022



When in Wigtown, Scotland, you may want to stop by The Bookshop, Shaun Bythell's shop that has been the basis of his hilariously grumpy observations in *Confessions of a Bookseller*, *Seven Kinds of People You Find in Bookshops*, and now *Reminders of the Day*. Through diaries of daily life, Bythell has created an endearing and cozy world for booklovers, a warm and

welcome memoir of a life in books. The Bookshop is the largest second-hand bookshop in Scotland, with thousands of books across nearly a mile of shelves, yet it is "endearing and cozy," with a real log fire, and Captain, the portly bookshop cat. You'd think that after twenty years, Bythell would be used to his quirky customers by now. Don't get him wrong, there are some good ones among the antiquarian porn-hunters, die-hard train book lovers, people who confuse bookshops for libraries, and the toddlers just looking for a nice cozy corner in which to wee. He's sure there are some good ones. There must be . . .



Shaun Bythell

Filled with the pernickety warmth and humor that has touched readers around the world, stuffed with literary treasures, hidden gems, and incunabula, *Reminders of the Day* is a warm and welcome memoir of a life in books.

Sources: David Godine Books

Indigenuity: Native Craftwork and the Art of American Literatures (Critical Indigenuities)

Caroline Wigginton

University of North Carolina Press

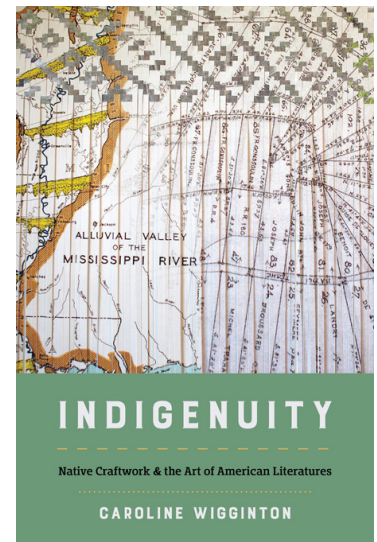
328 pp., November 2022

For hundreds of years, American artisanship and American authorship were entangled practices rather than distinct disciplines. Books, like other objects, were multisensory items all North American communities and cultures, including Native and settler colonial ones, regularly made and used. All cultures and communities narrated and documented their histories and imaginations through a variety of media. All created objects for domestic, sacred, curative, and collective purposes.

In this innovative work at the intersection of Indigenous studies, literary studies, book history, and material culture studies, Wigginton tells a story of the interweavings of Native craftwork and American literatures from their ancient roots to the present. Focused primarily on North America, this book argues for the foundational but often-hidden aesthetic orientation of American literary history toward Native craftwork. Wigginton knits this narrative to another of Indigenous aesthetic repatriation through the making and using of books and works of material expression. Ultimately, she reveals that Native craftwork is by turns the warp and weft of American literature, interwoven throughout its long history.

Caroline Wigginton is Chair and Associate Professor of English at the University of Mississippi. She is the author of *In the Neighborhood: Women's Publication in Early America* (Massachusetts 2016).

Source: University of North Carolina Press



Books in Brief, continued

Building the Book from the Ancient World to the Present Day: How Manuscript, Printed, and Digital Texts Are Made

Barbara Heritage and Ruth-Ellen St. Onge
University of Virginia, and Rare Book School



Building the Book from the Ancient World to the Present Day offers a carefully curated overview of how books have been produced throughout history and across various regions of the globe. This richly illustrated volume walks readers through the unique collections of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia.

Founded by MacArthur

Fellow Terry Belanger, this international institute brings together leading curators, librarians, book historians, curators, and collectors from around the world to teach and learn about books as physical objects. See through their eyes how the book is made, step by step, from substrate to letterform, from printing to binding—and how technological innovations, such as the invention of paper or printing with metal type, developed in various societies.

This volume will prove instructive for cultural heritage professionals and general booklovers alike.



Barbara Heritage is Associate Director & Curator of Collections of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia.

Ruth-Ellen St. Onge is the Associate Curator & Special Collections Librarian of Rare Book School.

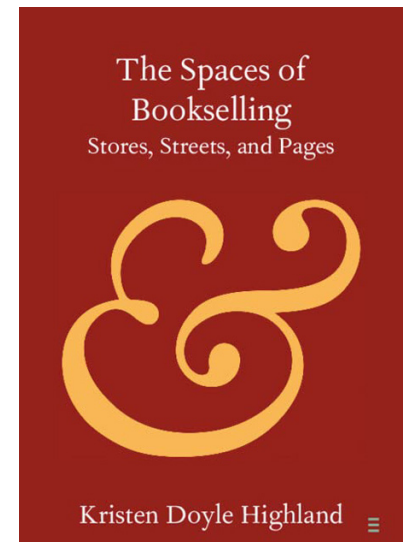
Source: University of Virginia

**The Spaces of Bookselling: Stores, Streets, and Pages**

Cambridge
Kristen Doyle Highland
75 pp., February 2023

The spaces of bookselling have as many stories to tell as do the books for sale. More than static backgrounds for bookselling, these dynamic spaces both shape individual and collective behaviors and perceptions and are shaped by the values and practices of booksellers and book buyers.

This volume in the Elements of Publishing and Book Culture series focuses primarily on bookselling in the United States from the 19th through the 21st centuries and examines three key bookselling spaces: the store, the street, and the catalogue. Following an introduction, the second section considers how the material space of bookstores shapes social engagement in, and cultural values associated with, the bookstore. Section three turns to itinerant and sidewalk booksellers and the ways in which they use the physical, social, and legal space of the street to craft geographies of belonging. And the final section pages through bookseller catalogues, examining them as a significant genre that extends the physical space of the bookstore into a traditional virtual space.



Kristen Doyle Highland is an Assistant Professor of English at American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates where she teaches American Literature, book culture and literary studies, public speaking, and research writing.

Sources: Cambridge; American University at Sharjah

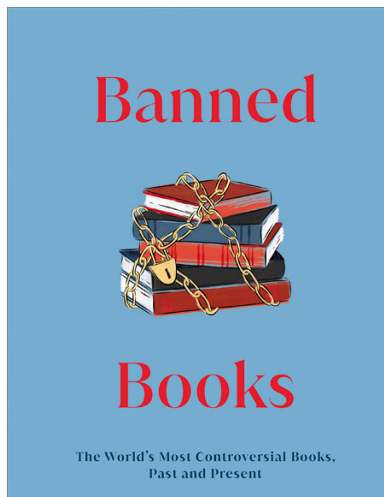


Books in Brief, concluded

Banned Books: The World's Most Controversial Books, Past and Present

DK

192 pp., August 2022



Banned Books explores why some of the world's most important literary classics and seminal nonfiction titles were once deemed too controversial for the public to read – whether for challenging racial or sexual norms, satirizing public figures, or simply being deemed unfit for young readers.

From *All Quiet on the Western Front* and the repeated suppression of *On the Origin of the Species*, to 1984, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Catcher in the Rye*, and *Huckleberry Finn*, *Banned Books* examines the astonishing role that some books have played in changing history.

Global in scope, *Banned Books* covers a broad range of genres and subject areas in fiction and nonfiction, ranging from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to *Spycatcher*. It offers informative insights into society, politics, law, and religious beliefs, in different countries around the world. Beautifully illustrated with images of first editions, illustrations of the books' authors have been specially commissioned. Extracts for the banned books and quotations about them provide additional insights into the wide gap that often exists between book content, literary reception, and authoritarian judgment.

Banned Books profiles a selection of the most infamous, intriguing and controversial books ever written, whilst offering a unique perspective on the history of the written word, with insights into the often surprising reasons books have been banned throughout history and across the world.

Source: DK

[Bookish fiction]

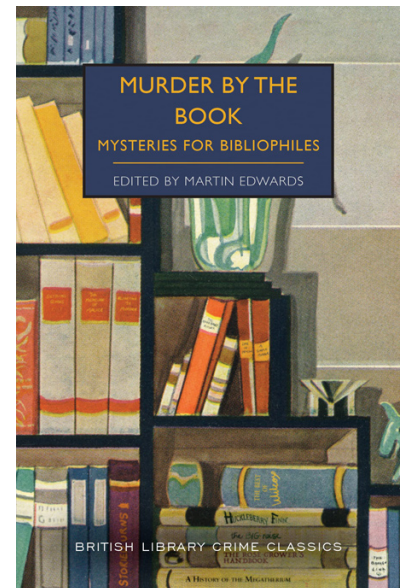
Murder by the Book (British Library Crime Classics)

Martin Edwards, ed.

Poisoned Pen Press

304 pp., September 2022

British crime novelist, award-winning author, crime fiction critic, and historian Martin Edwards is librarian and guide for this irresistible stack of bibliomysteries, where “golden age–inspired puzzle masters [are] doing what they do best: bringing together readers, books, and felonies [in] perhaps the single best collection yet in this blue-chip series” (Kirkus, Starred Review).



There is no better hiding place for clues – or red herrings – than inside the pages of a book. But in this world of resentful ghost writers, indiscreet playwrights, and unscrupulous book collectors, literary prowess is often a prologue to disaster. Readers should be warned that the most riveting tales often conceal the deadliest of secrets.

Featuring much-loved Golden Age detectives Nigel Strangeways, Philip Trent, Detective Chief Inspector Roderick Alleyn, and others, a bookish puzzle threatens an eagerly awaited inheritance; a submission to a publisher recounts a murder that seems increasingly to be a work of nonfiction; an irate novelist puts a grisly end to the source of his writer's block.

Kenneth Martin Edwards is current President of the Detection Club. In 2020, he was awarded the Crime Writers' Association's Diamond Dagger, the highest honor in British crime writing.

Source: British Library and Poisoned Pen Press





Bayt al-Hikmah, or the House of Wisdom, was a great library founded in 9th-century Baghdad, then the centerpiece of the Islamic world. It held a vast number of Persian, Indian, Greek, and Latin manuscripts on mathematics, astronomy, science, medicine and philosophy. Baghdad attracted many fine scholars who were both researchers and practitioners. Library departments included acquisitions, loans, copying and binding, maps and manuscripts, translation and authoring, fueling the intellectual growth of the Islamic world and preserving ancient works that would one day fuel the Renaissance. The Mongols sacked Baghdad in 1258, dumping so many books into the Tigris that the river was said to run black with ink. Persian scholar Nasir al-Din al-Tusi rescued 400,000 manuscripts, taking them 600 miles to Maragheh observatory (now in northern Azerbaijan; shown above). However, the observatory began to decline within 50 years due to lack of patronage. The books in the library were dispersed or destroyed.



This Month's Writers and Contributors

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

David Hall
Maureen E. Mulvihill
Carl Mario Nudi
Irene Pavese
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!

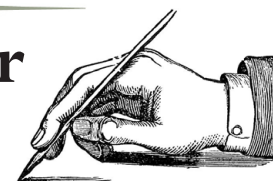
If you love books, take your interest to the next level by joining a group of dedicated book lovers (i.e., bibliophiles). You will meet serious collectors, dealers, scholars, and readers, and you will discover a lively, enjoyable group.



It's easy to join – just send an email with your name, mailing address, and phone number to Floridabibliophiles@gmail.com. Use Paypal to send your \$50 annual dues to that same address, or mail a check to Florida Bibliophile Society, P.O. Box 530682, St. Petersburg FL 33747.

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

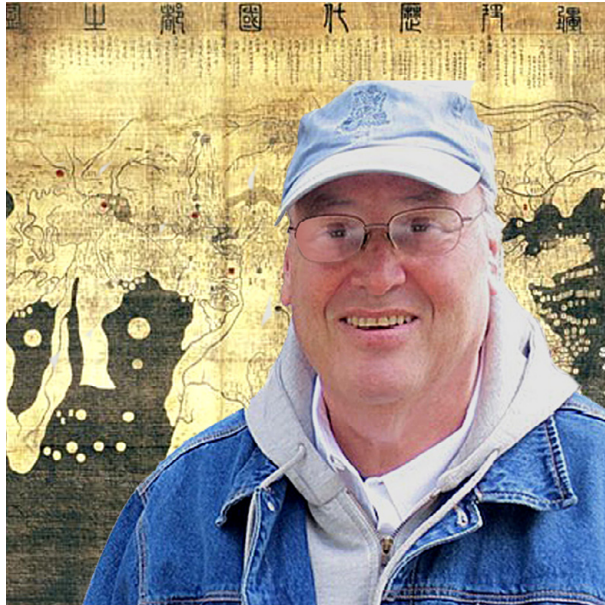
Write for Your Newsletter!



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

March 2023



Carey Gordon: From the Nile to the Silk Road: A Life in Books

Seminole Community Library
9200 113th St N, Seminole, FL
(and Zoom)

March 19, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

Carey grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, a great book town, and developed a love for books at an early age from his parents. After practicing law for several years in Cleveland, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service, spending nearly 30 years in eight long-term postings in Africa and Asia. During his years overseas, he actively collected books about the places where he lived and worked, including the Sudan, Congo, Pakistan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan and more. He will share some of his favorite books from his journey from the Nile to the Silk Road.

April 2023



Greg Byrd – The Art and Architecture of Constructing the Poetry Book

Macdonald-Kelce Library
401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa, FL
(and Zoom)

April 16, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

For National Poetry Month, we welcome Greg Byrd. Greg won the 2018 Robert Phillips Chapbook prize from the Texas Review Press for *The Name of the God Who Speaks*. He is a Fulbright Fellow, a Pushcart nominee and received Individual Artist Grantee from Creative Pinellas. His recent prose appears in *Apalachee Review*, *Willow Springs*, *Baltimore Review*, and *Saw Palm*. His poems have appeared widely in journals such as *Puerto del Sol*, *Tampa Review*, *Cortland Review*, and *Poeteka* (Albania, in translation). See more of his work at gregorybyrd.org. Greg has taught writing, literature and humanities for more than 30 years at St. Petersburg College.



Book Events and Podcasts

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

Florida Book Events

— March 10–12 —

FLORIDA ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR

St. Petersburg Coliseum

(www.floridaantiquarianbookfair.com/)

— March 18 —

Mega Mystery Book Sale

Friends of Central Library, Manatee County

1301 Barcarrota Blvd. West in Bradenton, Florida

Entire contents of a mystery books store for sale.

— March 20–21 —

Palm Beach Book Festival

West Palm Beach, FL

(www.palmbeachbookfestival.com/)

— March 24–25 —

Venice Book Fair and Writers Festival

Venice, FL (venicebookfair.com/)

— April 1 —

BookMania! (est. 1994)

Jensen Beach, FL (www.libraryfoundationmc.org/programs-/bookmania-festival/)

— April 15 —

Orlando Book Festival, Orlando Public Library

(attend.ocls.info/event/5804591#branch)

— April 23 —

World Book Day

(www.unesco.org/en/days/world-book-and-copyright)

— April 29 —

Independent Bookstore Day Shop Your Local Bookstore!

(www.indiebound.org/independent-bookstore-day)

— April 29 —

Tampa-Hillsborough County Storytelling Festival

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

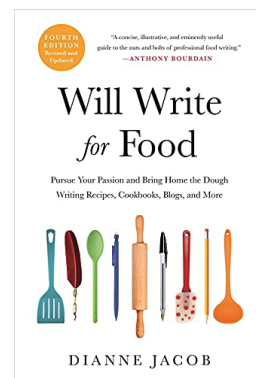
Behind the Bookshelves, the AbeBooks Podcast

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

Recent episodes:

February 12 – Dianne Jacob: The Food Writing Coach

We're joined by Dianne Jacob, a writing coach who specializes in food writing. Dianne tutors would-be writers on writing and publishing books, and also writing freelance articles, and blogging. Many of her students have signed publishing deals with major publishers. Dianne is the author of *Will Write for Food: Pursue Your Passion and Bring Home the Dough Writing Recipes, Cookbooks, Blogs and More* – a book that is essential for anyone wishing to write professionally about food. We discuss the most common mistakes made by would-be writers, Anthony Bourdain's impact, the art of writing recipes, and much more.



January 24 – Danielle Clode on *Koalas Uncovered*

We go Down Under to learn about koalas with Australian zoologist Danielle Clode, who has written a new book called *Koala: A Natural History and an Uncertain Future*. Koalas regularly appeared in Danielle's backyard, but it was only when a bushfire came close that she started to pay closer attention to them. Her book shows how complex and mysterious they are. We discuss how koalas are affected by disease, climate change, wildfires, and overpopulation.

KOALA

A Natural History
and an Uncertain Future

Danielle Clode



Book Events and Podcasts, continued

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 love books. The website provides podcasts back to 2006, lists of reading, links, etc.

Recent episodes:

Feb. 28 – Scott Ferris on Artist and Book Illustrator Rockwell Kent — Ferris is a specialist in the art of illustrator Rockwell Kent (1882–1971). By 1920, Kent had established himself a preeminent graphic artist. His illustrations for *Moby Dick* proved extremely popular and some of his best-known work. During 1920–1940, he produced advertisements, bookplates, and satirical drawings for *Vanity Fair*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Life*. In the 1940s, Kent focused on progressive causes, which resulted in problems with the U.S. government that damaged his reputation.

Feb 19 – Stephen Marche on Writing and Failure — Is failure an inherent part of writing? I'd say, this is true, but is still true for writing as a pure "exercise"? I follow these ideas in conversation with Marche about his new book *On Writing and Failure: Or, On the Peculiar Perseverance Required to Endure the Life of a Writer*.

Feb. 14 – Sasha Tochilovsky on One of the Greatest Partnerships in Magazine History — Tochilovsky is a graphic designer, typographer, curator, teacher and head of the Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography at the Cooper Union in New York City. We talk about one of the greatest creative teams in magazine history: Ralph Ginzburg and Herb Lubalin.

Feb. 6 – Andy Hughes on Bob Caro and Book Production at Knopf — Hughes is Senior Vice President of Production and Design at Knopf Doubleday. He's superb on what goes into the making of a good book. Going back 40+ years and returning to the present, he talks to me about everything from hot metal and linotype machines, to mainframes and desktop computers.

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.

AAS focuses on pre-1876 events and holds the "largest and most accessible collection" of related print materials. The AAS's Program in the History of the Book in American Culture (PHBAC) was established in 1983. PHBAC sponsors **Virtual Book Talk**, showcasing "authors of recently published scholarly monographs, digital-equivalents, and creative works broadly related to book history and print culture." Free, but advance registration is required.

Upcoming episodes:

Mon., March 27, 7:30 p.m. ET – Laura Wasowicz: The Transatlantic Transformation of Poor Molly Goosey into La Gansa Amorosa

Wasowicz explores the appropriation, adaptation, and translation of the picture book *Michaelmas Day or The Fate of Poor Molly Goosey*. Originally issued in London and reprinted in Philadelphia by Appleton ca. 1843; it was Americanized and issued in Boston in 1850 as *Thanksgiving Day*. Around 1870, it was published in New York as *La Historia de La Gansa Amorosa* for sale in the emerging Hispanic book market in North and South America.

Thurs., April 6, 7 p.m. ET – Kathryn Walkiewicz, Lisa Brooks: Reading Territory: Indigenous and Black Freedom, Removal, and the 19th-Century State

The formation of new states was an essential feature of U.S. expansion throughout the long 19th century, and debates over statehood and states' rights were waged not only in legislative assemblies but also in newspapers, maps, land surveys, and other forms of print and visual culture. Assessing these texts and archives, Walkiewicz theorizes the logics of federalism and states' rights in the production of U.S. empire.

Book Events and Podcasts, concluded

The Book Collector Podcast

In 1952, James Bond author Ian Fleming created *The Book Collector*, a “unique periodical for bibliophiles,” with articles on book collecting, modern first editions, typography, national libraries, etc. Fleming and the journal editor John Hayward died in 1964, but the journal was revived by new owner-editor Nicolas Barker. In 2016, Fleming’s nephews, James and Fergus Fleming, took over, and in 2020, created a podcast, featuring readings from the journal’s archives. There are now [67 podcasts](#) on SoundCloud, with recent additions:

A Friend Of Gutta Percha, by John Saumarez Smith. Smith (1943–2021) was a bookseller at the legendary London firm Heywood Hill. Smith recounts some of the binders used by Heywood Hill: “none of whom was under 40 – 80 might be more accurate.”

Salesmen To The Last Literary Salon, by John Saumarez Smith. Smith recommends *The British Book Trade: An Oral History* by Sue Bradley, who directed the seven-year recording project Book Trade Lives, at the British Library. Smith adds some of his own memories, not touched upon in the book. He fondly remembers some of the reps and travellers who sold new books to Heywood Hill during his time as a book dealer.

The Rosenbach Podcast

The Art of the Book: A Conversation with Pop-up Book Artist Colette Fu About Libraries and the Visual Arts

Books are not just literary and historical artifacts; they can also be visual artworks. In this episode of The Rosenbach Podcast, renowned Philadelphia-based pop-up book artist Colette Fu introduces us to her art form and explains what inspires her to explore cross-cultural interactions by means of the pop-up book.

Grolier Club of New York Videos

The Grolier Club of New York has posted [many book-related videos on Vimeo](#), including virtual exhibition openings, tours, talks, and show-and-tell episodes. Recent episodes include:

December 17 – Virtual Tour: “Animated Advertising: 200 Years of Premiums, Promos, and Pop-ups.” A virtual tour of selections from Ellen G. K. Rubin’s collection on display at the Grolier Club through Feb. 11, featuring 200 years of animated and dimensional paper devices that promote products, art, entertainment, and ideas in areas of food, fashion, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, travel, music, and politics, such as a pop-up Yogi Berra baseball card, an inflatable Wanamaker postcard, an annual report for Eskimo Pie in the form of an ice cream popsicle, the first automobile ad, and a video showing many of the objects in motion.

November 15 – Special Functions Lecture: “Jenny Robb and Walter Evans on Black Cartoonist Oliver “Ollie” Harrington (1912–1995).” Harrington was an acclaimed, versatile contributor to numerous publications as well as an antiracism activist. Georgia-based physician Walter Evans, a philanthropist and collector of historical and contemporary African American art and literature, discusses Harrington’s legacy with Jenny Robb, Head Curator of Comics and Cartoon Art at Ohio State University’s Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum.

October 24 – Special Functions Lecture: Leonard Marcus on “The Modernist in the Nursery: How Author/Illustrator Dorothy Kunhardt Made the Picture Book New.” Best known for *Pat the Bunny* (1940), Kunhardt turned the children’s publishing world on its ear as the creator of 40 innovative books whose jaunty gamelike narratives and faux-naïf art expressed her affinity for modernism and grasp of the latest theories of childhood development. Marcus will take a fresh look at this under-appreciated visionary’s legacy, which is also the subject of a new book he has coauthored, *Dorothy Kunhardt: Collected Works*, with ephemera, drawings, unpublished manuscripts, and more.

...and More

Octavo – Grand opera and the book world share versions of this term which refers to division by eight. In the music world, the octave is eight steps of a musical scale, and in the book world, octavo refers to a sheet of paper folded into eight pages. “Octavo” in this sense goes back to the 1400s and comes from the Latin word for eight, “octavus,” and means “in eight [parts].” Presses in those days took a sheet of paper about 20 × 24 inches. A full sheet of paper varied from these dimensions, but paper makers knew that the sheet had to fit on a press, and that gave some standardization. Books were printed with several pages on a single sheet, front and back – they still are, but the sheets

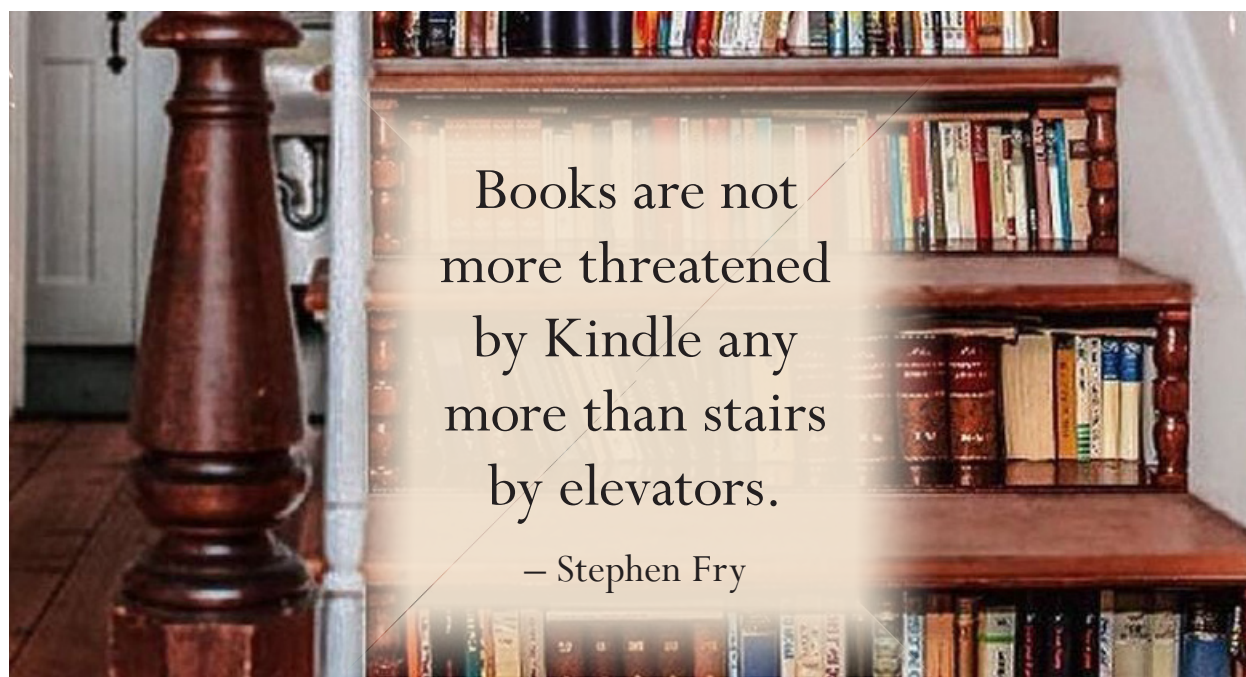
are usually much bigger. If a page of text took up half a sheet, it was then folded in half to make a folio size. If four pages were printed on a single sheet (that’s four each side), then the sheet would be folded twice to make a “quarto.” (This newsletter is 8½ × 11 inches, roughly a modern quarto.) If eight pages were printed on a single sheet (that’s eight each side), the sheet would be folded three times to make an “octavo.” (Try it at home!) And it could go on from there to duodecimo (12 pages), sextodecimo (16 pages), and so on, abbreviated 4to (quarto), 8to (octavo), 12to (duodecimo), etc. Modern books are usually printed on very large sheets of paper or rolls, so 4to and 8to refer to traditional sizes rather than literally how many times a sheet was folded. Octavo is roughly 6 × 9 inches, like a typical modern hardback. It’s a convenient size that uses fewer sheets of paper, requires less work, is less expensive and handy to carry. Octavo became the most common book size for all these reasons and is still with us today.



The “Bologna stone” of 1389 defined the four official sizes of full sheets of paper in that city: Imperial, Royal, Medial, and Chancery. The sign reads, “These are the moulds of the city of Bologna, which say what the sizes of the sheets of cotton paper must be, which are made in Bologna and the surrounding area, as is set out here below.” This is a 17th-century reproduction as shown by the guild sign of the Society of Pharmacists, which was founded in 1673.



Elizabeth Billington, 1801 image. Look her up.



Florida Bibliophile Society 2022–2023 Season



David Hall

FBS meetings will be held both in-person and via Zoom. Check the Upcoming Events page for details.

September 18 • FBS Members – September Show and Tell: Members brought a fascinating selection of books from their collections – a portrait of their interests and experiences.

October 16 • Art Adkins – From the Beat to the Book: A Policeman Writes Detective Novels: Art was a Los Angeles police officer for many years before “retiring” to Micanopy, where he owns and operates the Antique City Mall. In his “spare” time, he writes detective novels. His second novel, *Power Grid*, was published in 2021.

November 20 • Gareth and Griffeth Whitehurst – Field Trip to Whitehurst Gallery and Library, Tarpon Springs: Gareth Whitehurst and his son Griffeth Whitehurst welcomed FBS to visit their remarkable library housed in a replica of the Jefferson Memorial.

December 18 • FBS Holiday Party: To coin a phrase: A good time was had by all! We were hosted again at the lovely home of Ben and Joyce Wiley. Thanks for their hospitality! As promised, it was an afternoon of food, fun, books, and laughter!

January 15 • David Hall – Aspects of Book Publishing, 1971–1985: David’s thirty-year career as an editor was spent in the intense world of New York publishing. He knows book publishing in a way that few do, and he truly gave us an insider’s view.

February 19 • Irene Pavese – The Evolution of Margaret Armstrong: Botanist, Illustrator, Book Designer: Irene collects the work of Margaret Armstrong (1867–1944) whose illustrations for books,

especially covers in the Art Nouveau style, are inspired by her botanical background.

March 10–12 • 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 will host a table at the entrance where we answer questions and hold parcels for visitors. We plan to have a booth dedicated to FBS where we can spend more time with guests. On Sunday, we usually offer free book valuations.

March 19 • Carey Gordon – From the Nile to the Silk Road: A Life in Books: Carey’s career in the foreign service took him to many exotic locations. During his time in each, he learned local culture and collected books. Carey will share his experiences and selections from his remarkable library.

April 16 • Greg Byrd – The Art and Architecture of Constructing the Poetry Book: For National Poetry Month, we welcome Greg Byrd. Greg is a professor of English at St. Petersburg College where he teaches American Literature, Creative Writing, English Composition, and Literature. He is the author of two novels and several books of poetry.

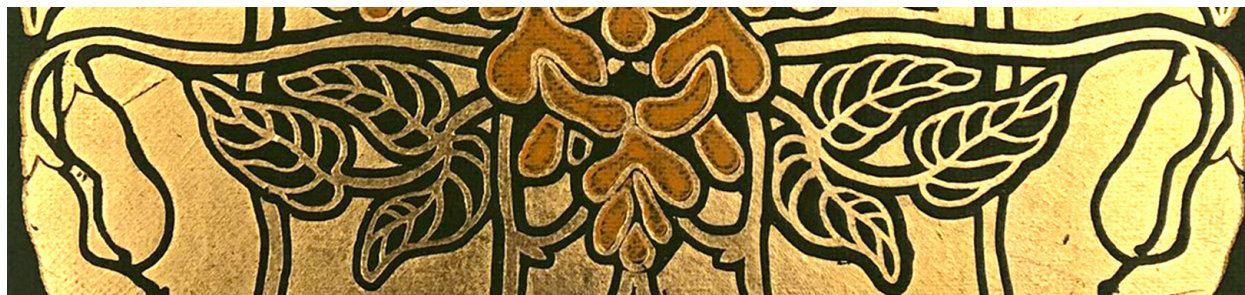
April 22–26 • Gainesville Getaway: The semiannual Alachua County Friends of the Library book sale features over 500,000 books, CDs, and other media in the Friends’ Book House in downtown Gainesville. Make a day or a weekend of it. The sale runs for five days, April 22–26.

May 21, 1:30 p.m. • Banquet: Watch this space. Planning for the 2023 FBS Banquet is underway.

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



Endpaper • Ah, Spring!



When first a bibliophile's heart turns to thoughts of...

We're enjoying spring in Florida, though many other parts of the country are still working through winter, and we hope ya'll have plenty of hot cocoa and good books to get through to your own spectacular springs. If not, let us know, and we'll send you some!

In the meantime, we are looking forward to the **Florida Antiquarian Book Fair** in St. Petersburg, the Lunar New Year of the Florida bibliophile calendar. It's always beautifully run by our friend Sarah Smith. It's hard enough to entertain a couple of out-of-town guests, much less several hundred who are towing hundreds of thousands of books and expecting thousands of guests of their own.

Hats off to you, Sarah!

It will be a grand time. It's always fun to join with other FBS members to host the tables and just have

a little extra time to see each other and catch up. (A special thank you in advance to all you volunteers ... and there's still time to join in. We'll need all the hands we can get!) Fun also to meet and greet all those eager book lovers and fair attendees. For those of us who have attended the fair for a number of years, we'll see old friends and chat about how things have been, and we'll share a few memories about those we have lost.

And the books... you'll see true rarities, obscurities, even a few absurdities, many affordable, others less so, and some just plain expensive, gleaming in display lights behind glass.

I'm pretty sure they won't have cotton candy or those giant pretzels, but you might be able to get a hot dog. All of this under twinkling blue lights strung overhead. It truly is a *book fair*!

See you at the *book fair*! — Charles

The Florida Bibliophile Society

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