



Aldus Society Notes

Spring 2021

Volume 21, No. 2

From the President

Greetings Aldines,

As spring blossoms all around us, so does hope that the pandemic is beginning to fade away, as vaccinations are now widely available, very popular and much appreciated. Most of my family and acquaintances have had their shots and are well past their waiting periods. We are cautiously coming back together to enjoy each other's company, in-person and, more and more, without masks.

As the Aldus Society begins to look forward to returning to live program meetings once again in the not-too-distant future, I wanted to share with you our plans – as they stand now – for programming for 2021/22. We have successfully shifted most of the 2020/21 speakers to the same months next program year. And, except for our February and March 2022 programs, we have speakers scheduled for every month next year. As most readers are aware, we had Zoom presentations by our originally-scheduled February and March 2020 speakers, Koriitha Mitchell and Anne Trubek, respectively. Mitchell's talk was on February 11, 2021, and Trubek presented on April 8, 2021. So, we need to fill the February and March slots for next year – and our Program Committee is working on that now. Stay tuned for details regarding dates and locations.

I also wanted to share the reasoning that lay behind the Board's decision *not* to present more of our 2020/21 programs as virtual events. We observed that relatively few Aldus members attended the virtual gatherings, as well as the Caxton Club programs that were made available to us. It was fairly obvious that our members largely prefer the fellowship of our in-person gatherings, and many have stated they just plain dislike or are not technically comfortable with Zoom meetings. Fair

enough. Most of us prefer live vs virtual. So, rather than have so many members, who usually attend our live meetings, miss out on the rest of our wonderful scheduled programs, it just made more sense to try and reschedule them for next year. Once again, we remain optimistic that restrictions will be lifted by late-summer/fall 2021, and venues will once again be available to rent!



In other news, as of this writing, the Board of Trustees is working to recruit new board members, and we are still trying to fill, at a minimum, two board positions. After our annual meeting – probably to be held in May, virtually or like last year, by email – I will be stepping down as President and trustee as I reach the end of my 3-year term on the board. Likewise, long-serving trustee and secretary, Mary Saup, is stepping down. This will leave just five trustees, and our recently-updated by-laws require our board to consist of 7-12 members. So, If you haven't heard otherwise, please contact me if you would be willing to serve.

That's all for now. Enjoy the newsletter. See you on the other side of the pandemic!

Harry Campbell

Aldus Society Meetings

*Regular meetings of the Aldus Society are held at 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month between September and May. Meetings are held at **Thurber Center, 91 Jefferson Avenue, Columbus, Ohio** (unless otherwise announced). Socializing at 7:00 p.m. Free parking on Jefferson or behind Thurber House and at State Auto rear parking lot (between 11th St. and Washington).*

Winter/Spring Program Recaps

The Aldus Society

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Photographer at Large

George Cowmeadow Bauman

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On February 11, 2021, Koritha Mitchell presented a virtual program on her new edition of the 1892 African American Classic Novel, *Iola Leroy*, by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper. She had a very engaged audience of about 25 Aldus members and guests. Her edition of *Iola Leroy* is no ordinary edition. Besides reproducing the novel with extensive explanatory footnotes, it offers a thorough introduction and seven appendices that provide historical and cultural context. Mitchell discussed the significance of this 1892 novel and its exceptional author and shared insights from her editorial journey.

Koritha Mitchell is a literary historian, cultural critic, and associate professor of English at Ohio State University. She is author of *Living with Lynching: African American Lynching Plays, Performance, and Citizenship*,

which won book awards from the American Theatre and Drama Society and from the Society for the Study of American Women Writers. Her scholarly articles include “James Baldwin, Performance Theorist, Sings the Blues for Mister Charlie,” published by *American Quarterly*, and “Love in Action,” which appeared in *Callaloo* and draws parallels between lynching and violence against LGBTQ communities. Her second monograph, *From Slave Cabins to the White House: Homemade Citizenship in African American Culture*, was published in August 2020. Her commentary has appeared in outlets such as CNN, *Good Morning America*, *The Huffington Post*, NBC News, *PBS Newshour*, and NPR’s *Morning Edition*. Mitchell is also editor of the Broadview Edition of Frances Harper’s 1892 novel *Iola Leroy*.

Anne Trubek is the author of *The History and Uncertain Future of Handwriting*, and presented a Zoom program on that subject to an Aldus audience of about 30 members and guests, on April 8, 2021. Ann addressed how handwriting has changed since scribes first etched cuneiform tablets in ancient Sumeria. She explored the question “Is it okay that some American elementary schools no longer teach cursive?” And she discussed the various meanings we have ascribed to making marks upon surfaces since writing was invented, and how the most recent revolution in writing technology—the computer—is changing those meanings yet again. There followed a lively discussion by participants covering issues like different styles of learning in regards to taking notes by hand, including how hand-written note-taking helps some focus on, and remember a subject, and the role of cursive writing in the expression of ideas versus recording them.



Trubek is also the author of *So You Want To Publish A Book?* and *A Skeptic’s Guide To Writers’ Houses*, as well as editor of *Voices from the Rust Belt* and *The Cleveland Anthology*. She is founder and publisher of Belt Publishing.

A Look Ahead to 2021/22 Programming

Generally, the Programming Committee has been attempting to switch our cancelled 2020/21 speakers to the same months in our next program year, 2021/22. So far, it's going pretty well. Here's the schedule as it stands today. Of Course, everything is tentative at this point, pending unpredictable pandemic restrictions and venue availability. Otherwise, if a program on the list is labelled "TENTATIVE" it means final arrangements with the speaker or the date is have not been settled.

August 12, 2021 (TENTATIVE)

Jeff Smith, creator of the self-published and widely popular comic series *Bone*

September 9, 2021 (TENTATIVE)

Caitlin McGurk, OSU Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum (history of women cartoonists/Suffrage in political cartoons)

October 14, 2021

David Gura, Notre Dame University (collecting dispersed leaves of medieval Breton Book of Hours); David is hoping the university will allow faculty travel by then

November 11, 2021

Wes Baker, Aldus member and retired Cedarville University professor (freedom of expression)

December 9, 2021

Holiday party

January 13, 2022

Aldus Collects

February 10, 2022

TBD

March 10, 2022

TBD

April 14, 2022

Frank Mowery, retired Folger Shakespeare Library Conservator (A Conservator's Journey Through History)

May 12, 2022

Jeffrey Gress, Capital University (The Work of Mathias Armbruster, Columbus Scenic Designer, early 20th c.)

FABS News

Several member clubs of the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies (FABS) have recently resigned, or threatened to resign, in protest that one of the FABS members, the Rowfant Club, of Cleveland – one of the FABS founding members over 100 years ago – steadfastly remains “men only.” This protest by certain member clubs is based on the principle that they don't want to be associated with a larger organization that allows discrimination in any of its member clubs.

In response, the FABS trustees (representatives from all the member clubs), in the annual meeting March 11, discussed a non-discrimination clause that would amend the FABS Articles of Association, which will be voted on in an extra board meeting June 10. Formerly, the philosophy of FABS was that the larger organization would not dictate or interfere with the policies of its member clubs.

As a result, Rowfant has graciously resigned, and the hope is that the other clubs, whose resignations have not yet been formally accepted by the chairman, will withdraw their resignations. Here is wording from a March 6 letter to FABS Trustees:

“The withdrawal of the Rowfant Club from FABS means that, to the best of our knowledge, no current FABS member club engages in discriminatory membership practices. This removes the principal immediate reason for dissatisfaction with FABS policies as expressed by several FABS societies. Nonetheless, the Executive Committee is of the view that it is in the interest of FABS to adopt a robust policy with respect to any potential future discriminatory practices. The Executive Committee believes it would be appropriate to introduce such provisions in the Articles of Association.”

Current Aldus president, Harry Campbell, will be attending the virtual June meeting and voting, with the approval of the Aldus Society board, to accept the resolution. In the end, we can all be hopeful that if Cleveland area non-Rowfant bibliophiles desire a non-discriminatory society, someone will create one!

Searching for St. Kilda

By Donald Tunnicliff Rice



I'm sure many of you share my habit of building small collections of books devoted to subjects that have captured your interest at some point. For example, I have four books on the Canadian Trent-Severn Waterway that runs 240 miles southeast from Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario. The interest arose because I once spent a week there with friends thirty-some years ago. The books were purchased through chance encounters since then. I can't remember the last time I opened any of them, but I can't imagine ever getting rid of them.

One of my favorite clusters is the dozen books I have about St. Kilda, an interest that began in the early 1980s. Jack Finefrock had transformed the Kenyon College Bookstore into a destination, and one of his many improvements was the addition of a bin of remainders from university and other small presses. That's where I found *Island on the Edge of the World: The Story of St. Kilda* by Charles Maclean (Taplinger, 1980). For \$2.98 I couldn't pass it up.

To refresh your memory, St. Kilda is a tiny archipelago in the Atlantic Ocean some forty miles west of the westernmost point of Scotland's Outer Hebrides, an *ultima Thule* if ever there was one. There are many theories about how the name came about, but it's quite certain there's never been a saint named Kilda. For some 500 years the islands belonged to various MacLeods, one of whom sold them in 1931 to the Earl of Dumfries. In 1957 he bequeathed them to the National Trust for Scotland which owns them yet today.

It's believed that people first lived on Hirta, the largest and, at 2-1/2 square miles—the only truly habitable of the islands, 2,000 years ago—centuries before my ancestors were painting themselves blue and swinging from trees. They had to have been a hardy lot, not just to get there but also to land their boats. Landing on Hirta is dangerous and impracticable most of the year.

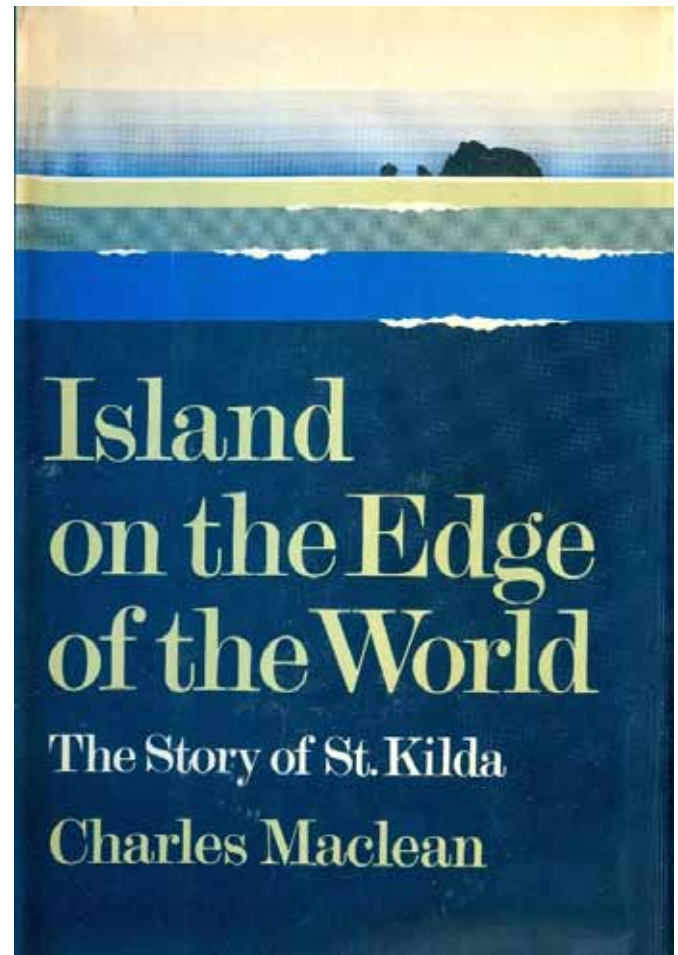


Fig. 1 The book that started it all.

I love islands, but what fascinated me most about St. Kilda was the last batch of people who could properly be called St. Kildans. Through the centuries the population expanded and contracted, never exceeding 180 and often hovering around 100. In 1930 there were an unsustainable 36 souls who sadly asked the British government to relocate them.



Fig. 2 St. Kildan women and girls, probably in the late nineteenth century.



Fig. 3 St. Kildan men, probably in the early twentieth century.



Fig. 4 The St. Kildans learned to knit early in the eighteenth century, when taught to do so by the wife of the first Christian missionary.



Fig. 5 A tourist aboard a modern-day ferry to St. Kilda. It's a 40-mile trip.

During their centuries on Hirta they fished, raised cattle and sheep, and grew such crops as barley, oats, and potatoes. Two mainstays, however, were seabird flesh and eggs. The men were skilled at climbing and rappelling on what are the highest sea cliffs in the United Kingdom, one of which—Conachair—exceeds 1,400 feet. At one time nearly a million seabirds, including puffins, gannets, fulmars, guillemots, and other species lived on the islands. As with so many other things, the number is dwindling, probably due to climate change.

To the outsider the culture of the St. Kildans would appear to be that of typical rural Scottish folk; however, to typical rural Scottish folk the St. Kildans were just as foreign as they'd be to you and me. By the late nineteenth century, tourists visited Hirta in the summer months to gape at the natives, much as they would have gaped at any strangers in a strange land. Today, over a century later, tourist boats still make daytrips to Hirta, now to see the renovated village. It's been my dream for years to be on one of those boats. Fat chance.

I earlier referred to the islanders as the last batch of people who could properly be called St. Kildans. Actually, that's not true. There are two other batches, one in present-day St. Kilda, a city in New Zealand, and the other, for which the first was named, a suburb of Melbourne. It was named not for the islands but for *The Lady of St. Kilda*, a schooner built in 1834 that was moored



Fig. 6 The stone hut where Lady Grange is thought to have been kept.

for some time in Melbourne. The ship itself was named for Rachel, Lady Grange, whose husband notoriously imprisoned her from 1734 to 1740 in a stone hut on Hirta, which she later described as “a viled neasty, stinking poor isle.” Hers is a well-known story, mentioned even by Boswell in *A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*. The story inspired two plays and at least two novels—and that leads me to one of my books.

The Lady of Hirta by W. C. Mackenzie (Alexander Gardner, 1905) is a typical first-person narrative set in the eighteenth century. Although populated by many historical figures, the narrator, one Ferehard Ross, is a fictional character who becomes obsessed with finding Lady Grange and freeing her. Mackenzie was a well-regarded historian of the period, so the novel probably gives an accurate picture of that time. And it's not badly written; however, it contains little about St. Kilda, but that's all right. It was a good story.

I own a second novel about the islands called *The Fulmar and the Rock: a Fable of St. Kilda* by Hugh Gunn Ross (Kennedy and Boyd, 2004). There aren't many novels set on Hirta in the olden times because any stories you could tell would be repetitive: an outsider comes to Hirta as a missionary (teacher, Church of Scotland minister), never really manages to make any close friends, and then dies or leaves. Ross's novel is about a teacher in the late 1800s. One of these days I'll read it. I know of only one novelist who had the nerve to write a book from the point of view of a St. Kildan, but it was the mind of Rachel Johnson, who left the island at age eight during the 1930 evacuation and became thoroughly Scottish.

There could be some novels set in modern times. Military installations have been on the islands since 1955, and St. Kilda is subject to some hellish gales. Maybe a survival story. Or perhaps a summer romance among the National Trust volunteers who renovate the houses. And, come to think of it, St. Kilda may be the only place left on Earth that hasn't been the site of a murder mystery. The tourists who visit each summer would make a perfect cast of characters.

The best books about St. Kilda are the travelers' tales, the earliest proper account being *A Late Voyage to St. Kilda* by M. Martin, Gent., first published in 1698. In it, Martin describes his journey to Hirta the previous year. There are many editions available. Mine is included in the third volume of John Pinkerton's *Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World* (Longman et al, 1809). It's an amazing story.

Proceeding forward in history, the next account I have is *With Nature and a Camera* written by Richard Kearton with 180 photos by Cherry Kearton (Cassell, 1898). It's a well-written book, but what makes it so special are the Kearton brothers. They practically invented nature photography, and in fact did invent many of its techniques.

This is their first book, published in 1898, eight years before *National Geographic* published its first halftone wildlife photos. Chapters one through three are devoted to St. Kilda. Cherry was so highly regarded that The Royal Geographical Society created the Cherry Kearton Medal and Award in his honor. Richard, who was a naturalist and Fellow of the Zoological Society of



Fig. 7 Rachel Johnson (third from the left) on a return visit to St. Kilda in 1980 with other evacuees.

London and the Royal Photographic Society, wrote a nicely detailed description of their adventure. This is a good book and also readily available.



Fig. 8 Richard (on the bottom) and Cherry Kearton doing whatever it takes to photograph a bird's nest.

The British writer, watercolorist, and photographer, Norman Heathcote, traveled to St. Kilda a year or two after the Keartons, and he too was accompanied by a sibling, his sister Evelyn. Longmans Green published his account, titled simply *St. Kilda*, in 1900. It was nicely reprinted by Rowell Press in 1985, which is the edition I have.



Fig. 9 A sketch of Conachair by Norman Heathcote. Note the size of the boat, if you can see it.

A book I'm looking forward to reading is *A Last Voyage to St. Kilda* by Alasdair Alpin MacGregor (Cassell, 1931). MacGregor was a popular Scottish travel writer of his day and of the sort, I've gathered, who was inclined to use such terms as "mine host." That's okay. Every ten years or so I enjoy reading a book like that. He doesn't arrive in St. Kilda until page 213 (out of 304), and I'm glad of that. Descriptions of St. Kildans and guillemots and soay sheep are fine, but I'm looking forward to spending some time aboard the Flying Scotsman from King's Cross to Edinburgh. Thence to Glasgow and traveling by boat through the Inner and Outer Hebrides before finally landing in Hirta. He does provide an eye-witness account of the evacuation. So this is a book on my crowded nightstand.

Kenneth Williamson was a British ornithologist who spent some time on St. Kilda in 1957 as a representative of the Nature Conservancy. He and his colleague, J. Morton Boyd, were there to ensure that the construction of a new military installation was accomplished, as he put it, "with as little disturbance as possible to the natural history and amenities of the islands." Their account, *St. Kilda Summer* (Country Book Club, 1961) is another book I'd like to get around to reading.

Of the remaining five or six books I'll mention only two, the first of which is *Excavations on Hirta*, 1986-90 by Norman Emery (National Trust for Scotland, 1996). This is a big book—8-1/2 x 12 inches—to accommodate the scores of expertly drawn line illustrations of artifacts and excavation sites, some down to the last pebble. There are also 37 photos. But for Chapter 6, which offers a general discussion of St. Kildan culture, society, economics, and so on, the book is best suited for professional archaeologists. Maybe if you were writing that mystery novel it could be a source of apt phrases to add a bit of verisimilitude to your tale.

I've been saving my favorite St. Kilda book—*A Description of St. Kilda* by Alexander Buchan—for last. In 1705 Buchan arrived on Hirta as a missionary hoping, at the behest of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, "to root out the pagan and Popish superstitious customs, so much yet in use among that people." What religious practices the St. Kildans followed were decidedly druidic, and that couldn't be left alone. Buchan, his wife, and eventually 13 children (many of whom died early) did their best until he too died in 1730. The text is taken from his handwritten notes and contains considerable material copied from Martin's earlier work, which he much admired.

So what makes it special? First, because it's part of a sad story. Buchan's

second oldest daughter, Jean, aged about fifteen (she wasn't quite sure) was sent to the mainland to get a proper education. The boat on which she was sailing wrecked while rounding the Mull of Kintyre (made famous by a Paul McCartney and the Wings song of that name). Fortunately, she was rescued and made her way to Glasgow and eventually to Edinburgh. Apparently her upbringing included training in sewing, which is how she was making a living—until being knocked down by a horse that broke her jawbone and left her unable to work. Her bad luck continued when she later broke an arm which was badly set and remained “mighty uneasy.” In 1752 she was encouraged by “several ministers and others” to publish this 50-page, leather-bound edition containing the preface that relates her sad plight. It also includes a dedication to Prince William. The leather cover bears a gold stamping, *Flecti non Frangi* (Bent but not Broken), probably to suggest Jean's attitude.

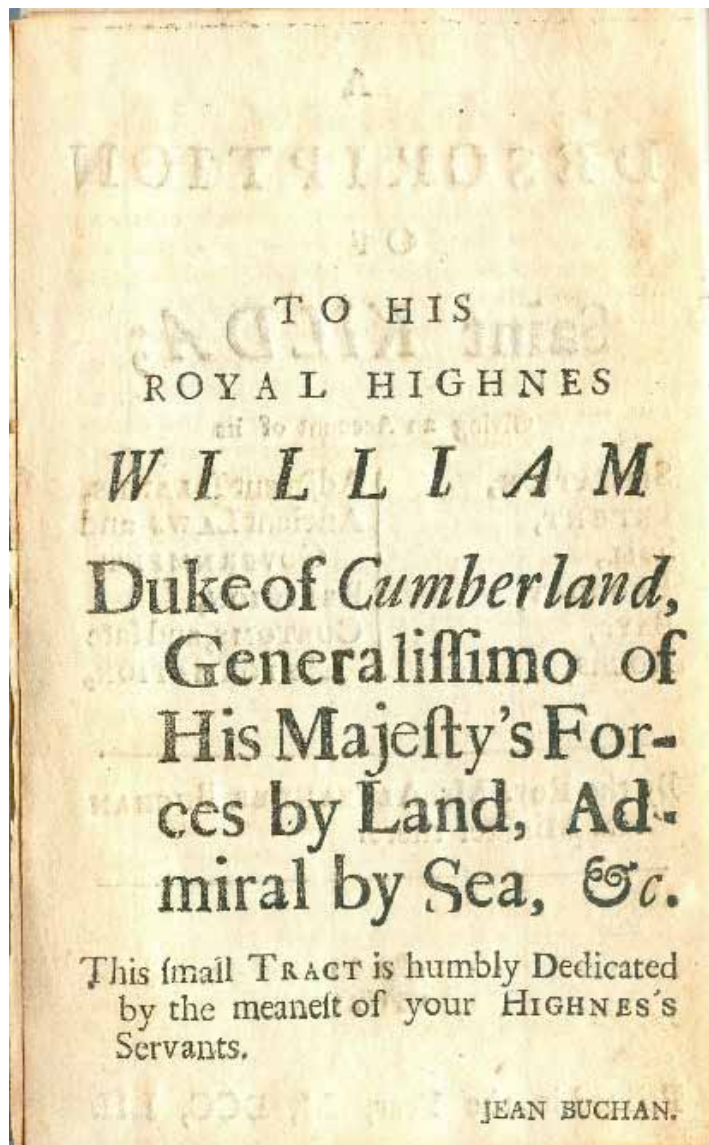


Fig. 10 The dedication page.

I haven't been able to learn if “His Royal Highness” owned a copy, but he might very well have. I do know that the copy I own was in the library of Lord Prestongrange (1721–1765) who, at the time, was the Lord Advocate of Scotland (comparable to Attorney General) because it contains his bookplate. Years later I was delighted to meet up with him as a significant character in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Catriona*. From Prestongrange the book found its way into the library of the Scottish painter and President of the Royal Scottish Academy, Sir William Fettes Douglas (1822–1891), whose signature appears above Prestongrange's plate. It's a nice association copy and now resides on a shelf in my library.



Fig. 11 The inside front cover showing Lord Prestongrange's bookplate and W. Fettes Douglas's signature.

One of the pleasures for me in collecting books is that moment when one of them practically jumps off the shelf into my hand, saying, “it's time, Don.” It would appear that I'm doomed to remain an armchair traveler to St. Kilda. So I'm looking forward to one of those “It's time, Don” moments and settling down for a vicarious trip in one of the as-yet-unread books in my St. Kilda collection. Wish me *turas math dhut*.

A Year of Pandemic Reading

By George Cowmeadow Bauman

Aren't we so thankful for books?

That's true generally isn't it? Or we wouldn't be members of a society which is dedicated to text in all of its glorious manifestations.

But our bibliophilia has been *extra* welcome during this year of pandemic isolation, when we've been basically quarantined from the family and friends whom we love and would be normally be associating with often, in homes, parks, restaurants, and perhaps in libraries and/or bookstores.

However, 2020 saw us walking alone in parks, by ourselves at home, supporting local restaurants the best we could with take-out/pick-up orders.

Through it all, there have been books which got us through some very lonely months. Ordered from libraries who provided at-the-curb service by gloved and masked librarians, or from struggling bookstores who have been grateful for those orders to be shipped to our homes, or from the non-struggling Amazon, whose ubiquitous trucks cruise the neighborhood daily, ringing cat-frightening doorbells and leaving boxed goodies on the front steps.

Or through e-reading services to stuff our Kindles full of good reading.

Books to make us laugh when laughter has been hard to come by as we see the mounting statistics of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, and are kept from hugging grandchildren and friends.

We've had books to engross us, to keep us from despairing after watching the evening news. Books to take us places, roaming the world via print because we weren't allowed to go places in real life.

We've even had crossword puzzle books to concentrate on, so we don't spend time puzzling out the worldwide spread of COVID-19.

Books have been *essential* to our survival this past year.

And now that we are getting vaccinated, we rejoice that libraries and bookstores are opening up a bit so we can go in and browse the stacks. Ordering books online eliminates the serendipitous factor of browsing, in libraries or bookstores. There are books waiting to be selected if only we knew about them. Authors who would be pleased to be welcomed into our homes, to spend a few days or weeks with us, in our living rooms, our studies, our bedrooms, at the kitchen table, or even in the ultimate room of privacy. We honor our author guests all over our houses, and now that the weather is breaking, perhaps they'll join us outside, on patios and lawn chairs, and in parks.

And the same goes with Kindles and other reading devices. Books go everywhere with us! Don't leave home without one!

Several books I've had the pleasure to read since the pandemic started are mentioned below. I recommend

each of them if you have a chance to access them.

I suggest that for the next newsletter, you share your favorite reads with other Aldines, the books which absolutely helped you through your quarantine. They don't have to be long reviews; just describe the books you liked and briefly what they're about and why we might like to read them, too.

Send your notes along to me (booknman@gmail.com) and I'll put together a story of our collective pandemic readings.

As Linda's license plate says: READ ON!

• ***THE PLANTER OF MODERN LIFE: LOUIS BROMFIELD AND THE SEEDS OF A FOOD REVOLUTION*** by Stephen Heyman

What an amazing man Bromfield was. We know him as a writer of serious stature, winning the Pulitzer for a novel, as well as writing well-received non-fiction.

But his interests and accomplishments extend far beyond his writing. In WW1 he volunteered to drive ambulances in France, and stayed there for many years, becoming the scion of the sizeable ex-pat community in Paris.

Elegant French garden parties. Developing farming ideas based on cutting edge agricultural science. Buying land in his home area of Mansfield. Becoming a friend to Hollywood and Broadway stars, and we all know of the marriage of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall at his Malabar Farm.

The author has taken a very complex man and written an entertaining biography which engrosses the reader in all of Bromfield's lives, creating a sympathetic portrait of a complex man.

The Planter of Modern Life: Louis Bromfield and the Seeds of a Food Revolution is one of the best books I've read recently. Heyman has written an engaging biography of a very important Ohioan.

• ***THE WORLD IS MY HOME: A MEMOIR*** by James Michener

I like good storytellers, and there aren't many better than James Michener. In this book, he tells stories one after another about the adventures of his distinguished life.

It's his autobiography, and an excellent one. I was entertained (and often enlightened) reading of his amazing

world, much of it far beyond the bounds of authorship. His busyness reminded me of Louis Bromfield. He ran for political office five times, winning twice, served on various civic and political and governmental organizations. Stood up to the McCarthyism craziness by helping take a case to the Supreme Court, and won. Went to China with Nixon, though a Democrat, as well as with him to Iran. He's traveled the world over many times. And you're with him on every adventure.

• **ZOAR: THE STORY OF AN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY** by Kathleen Fernandez

I reviewed this book for the *Quarterly* of the Ohioana Library, not expecting it to be as entertaining as it turned out to be. Like most here in Ohio, I'd heard of Zoar but knew nothing about it. Now I do.

It's the history of this community, founded in 1818 on the banks of the Tuscarawas River by German refugees from religious oppression. They helped build a stretch of the Ohio and Erie Canal, survived epidemics, financial crises, and the temptations of the outside world (mostly) for 79 years.

• **THIS IS HAPPINESS** by Niall Williams

Happiness is reading this beautifully written Irish novel. The setting is Ireland, in a tiny rural village during the electrification of the country. Doesn't sound like much, but the way Williams writes makes you want to read this slowly and catch the lyricism of his sentences and his empathy with his characters.

• **HUNTING FOR HOPE** by Scott Russell Sanders

What a perfect title for our pandemic year, though this excellent book of essays was written in 1998. Sanders is a fine essayist and storyteller, and once came to my bookshop in the middle of a blizzard and signed copies of his books I had in stock, simply because I had asked him to at a Dennison dinner the night before. For a while the only new books I sold were Sanders' books and Linda's. I enjoy him that much.

My copy is filled with post-its sticking out the fore-edge, because I want to return time and again to his precise thoughts, which do help provide hope.

I recommend that for the next newsletter, you share your reading list with other Aldines. Let's stay biblio-connected.

Book Hunting Notes 41: Collecting First Discoveries in Archaeology: The Tomb of Phillip of Macedon

By Bill Rich

Most of my "first discoveries" books include a lot of 19th century titles, some of which can be quite rare in 1st editions. But archaeology is an on-going science that is accelerating in more modern times.

At the time of his death in 336 B.C., Phillip II, the king of Macedon, had conquered all of Greece. The Greek city states were no more; all Greece was under Macedonian suzerainty. Phillip was assassinated by one of his own

guards. He was buried shortly after in a tomb close to his capital – Vergina, the ancient Aigai.

The Macedonians were Greek, spoke Greek, participated in the Olympic games, although their country was on the northern fringe of the Greek world. King Philip even imported the greatest scholar of the time, the philosopher Aristotle, to tutor his eldest son, Alexander, the future Alexander the Great. This

Fig. 1
Vergina. Some
of the ruins of
ancient Aigai.



professor wonders how much gold was necessary to pry Aristotle from Athens up to the remote north – but casual reading has not revealed this to me.

During the 19th and earlier 20th centuries, archaeologists excavated the site of Aigai, including the city and the royal palace (Fig. 1). There were also tumuli, where the aristocracies of the kingdom were buried. These nobles were incredibly wealthy, and considerable amounts of this wealth were entombed with them. In later years, the kingdom was raided by avaricious Gallic tribes, who broke into these tumuli and robbed them for this wealth.

In the later 20th century, the Greek archaeological service was well developed, and many world-famous Greek archaeologists made epic discoveries. My story is of one of these, Manolis Andronicos, and of one of the greatest discoveries in modern Greek archaeology. In 1977, Andronicos decided to excavate one of the largest burial tumuli near the ruins of the royal palace at Vergina. That year, he began using his own money- presumably, no foundation or government wanted to spend money on an already robbed-out tomb. But, this tomb had never been opened, despite its large size. As the excavation progress, results were published in scholarly journals. After the completion of the excavations, Andronicos published a milestone book on the work, *Vergina, The Royal Tombs*, first in Greek in 1984; an English version in 1994 (shown in Fig. 2).

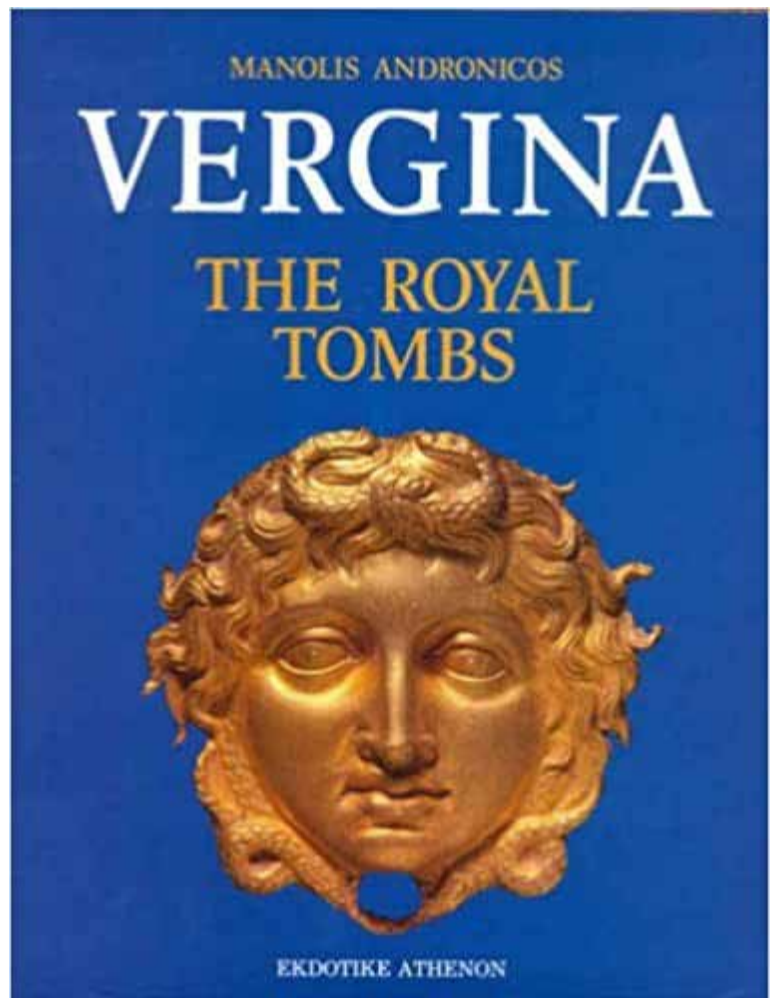


Fig. 2 The definitive discoveries from the tomb.

The façade of the tomb was the first part cleared. It was spectacularly painted with mythological scenes. A door led into the tomb, and it was immediately apparent that it was not robbed. The tomb was filled with objects, some of outstanding beauty. There were two chambers. The one nearest the entrance contained the cremated remains of a woman. These were placed in a golden box (larnax) and wrapped in a cloth of gold and purple (Fig 3).



Fig. 3 From the woman's tomb. The cloth of gold wrapping the remains.

The second, larger, room held the remains of a man, clearly a warrior. His ashes were in a gold larnax (Fig. 4), with the multi-pointed star of the Macedonian kingdom on the cover (Fig. 4). On the remains was a golden crown (Fig. 5), a copy of the laurel wreath crown typically worn, but here, in pure gold. The tomb was filled with the accoutrements of a Greek soldier – sword, shield, helmet, corselet, greaves, even a gold quiver for arrows. All were sumptuously decorated, befitting royalty. Further evidence that the man was King Phillip was provided by the remains of the skull – there was a great gash over the right eye socket, consistent with a wound he was known to have received. Further, one of the greaves was much shorter than the other, again, corresponding to known war wounds of the king. Finally, there was an ivory couch in the tomb, carved with busts of the royal family. After conquering most of the eastern Mediterranean world, the image of Alexander was well known from countless coins and statuary. His bust on



Fig. 4 The gold box containing Phillip's remains.



Fig. 5 The golden crown on Phillip's remains.

the couch was easily recognizable. But one other was Phillip, shown again with the wound over his eye (Fig. 6).

A final book collecting note: My (English) copy of the *Vergina* book is dated 1994. I don't know if this is the first printing, but a little grace note for me is that I found it, new, in a bookshop in Athens, and have cherished ever since.

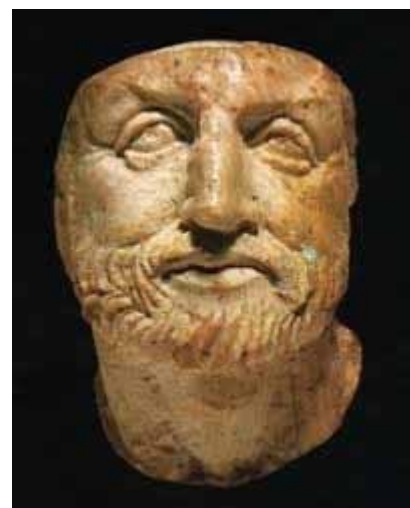


Fig. 6 The ivory image of King Phillip.

The Glimpset Guys

By Emerson Gilbert and George Bauman

Glimpset: A glimpse into remembered times.

Six years ago, Tony Clark, George Bauman, and Emerson Gilbert were having lunch at the Chef-O-Nette diner in Upper Arlington's Tremont Center. We three liked to tell tales of our families' histories, recall elusive stories, and in some cases, talk about family gravesites. We'd already written up a tale or two on our own and came up with the bright idea of meeting regularly to write together. Emerson coined the name for the stories—Glimpsets. And what is now a six-year tradition began.

Initially we met at the Tekhu Tea House in old Dublin, but soon switched to a room in the Upper Arlington Library, across Tremont Road from the Chef-O-Nette. Geoff Smith joined us, soon followed by Don Rice.

We meet monthly, for two hours; most of that time is spent yakking about what's going on in our lives and the world before settling down to the business at hand: writing a story—a Glimpset.

Twenty minutes is allotted for the actual writing time. Tony is our timekeeper who starts us off and periodically reminds us how much time we have left. Only the scraping of Geoff's pencil and the tappitty-tap on keyboards can be heard in the small room next to the Children's department of the library. When "One minute left" is announced, there's a frantic attempt to cram in much more than one minute's worth of effort before we hear, "Gentlemen, put your pencils down."

Most stories are of past memories or a genealogical quest. (At our ages, we do have many stories from our past!). Tales of two-hole outhouses, "interesting" relatives, baseball, old friends found, and animals—monkeys and Alabama swamp cats—and so many more. One of us even declared, "I'm not interested in writing about the truth!" And that's OK.

Occasionally we focus on a single topic which we all write about from our own unique perspectives. Examples have been: "The Sixties," which was interesting. We wrote about our first jobs in "One Shade of Red: A Steamy Proposition" and "Frozen Custard to Hot Steel Mill." Pets were a theme one month, providing us with "OPP" (Other People's Pets) and "The Joys of Petting." Another fun one was "My First Wife," which Geoff really enjoyed!

We write for enjoyment, without critique. Each of us reads their just-written Glimpset, while the others lean back and enjoy their friends' writing efforts.

Then we head across Tremont to the Chef-O-Nette for lunch. This 65-year-old restaurant still retains its 50s atmosphere and décor. Jeanie Tremio has been serving there for 33 years, and is the Queen of the Chef-O-Nette. We eat there often enough that she or anyone else taking our orders knows what to write down on their order pads: George gets a chicken salad sandwich with "George Fries"—which the owner/cook Harlan Howard knows means extra crispy. Tony works up and down the menu, but usually pairs it with, yep, George Fries. Emerson has a breaded pork tenderloin sandwich with George Fries, and Geoff usually gets what he calls "the best cheeseburger in Columbus" and, you guessed it, George Fries.

The past year, the Glimpset Group has been put on hold, like everything else, because of the pandemic. We thought about Zooming our meetings, but no one was enthusiastic about that. Very soon, though, we're hoping to see each other's smiling faces, whether it's at the Chef-O-Nette, a park, or on one of our patios. There are so many stories yet to write, and we're anxious to get at it. Maybe the first topic could be: "What I Did During My Pandemic Vacation."

Think about putting together your own Glimpset group of like-minded Aldines or friends. We believe it to be an enriching activity, for what you produce may be important to have for your family's history, little stories not likely to be remembered if you don't get them down. It's a lot of fun with no pressure to be the next John Updike or Ann Patchett and you'll probably write Glimpsets with entertaining titles like "Uncle Jennings Called Him Mezza," "Leaning Against the Cow," "The Reason I Stopped Camping" and "Looks Like We Got Us a Hippie!"

WRITE ON!

