



Aldus Society Notes

Spring 2022

Volume 22, No. 2

A Tribute Written in Memory of Bill Rich by His Close Friend and OSU Colleague Dr. Igor Adomovich, Professor of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

An introductory note from Geoff Smith:

I am glad that members of the Aldus Society will have an opportunity to read Igor Adamovich's tribute to Bill Rich. *[Ed. Note: As of this writing, no formal obituary has appeared.]* As Igor makes clear, Bill was among the elite of international scientists, something that would not be apparent in speaking with Bill since he was not one to bore people with accomplishments that most of us cannot grasp, at least I cannot. Bill might better have given the impression that he was professor of literature. He knew 18th and 19th British and American literature intimately and his love of literature, as many Aldus members well know, was augmented by an outstanding collection of British and American first editions. Bill's memory was prodigious and he could recite swaths of prose and poetry, from "Pericles' Funeral Oration" in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* to Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade" to Edgar Allan Poe's "Annabel Lee." Bill was also conversant in and a collector of archaeological books and mariner history and literature. Bill once told me, that upon graduation from high school (he was valedictorian, of course), his Latin teacher was disappointed to learn that he would be pursuing a career in science rather than classics. Bill was truly a Renaissance man.



Bill Rich receiving the 2018 Carol Logue Biblio-fellowship Award

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with great sorrow and heavy heart that I share the news of Professor Bill Rich's passing last night.

Bill has been on the OSU faculty for over 20 years, before retiring in 2007. In 1987, he founded and became the Director of the Nonequilibrium Thermodynamic Laboratories (NETL), which developed into a major research

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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).*

The Aldus Society

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George Cowmeadow Bauman

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(Continued from page 1)

center in nonequilibrium plasmas, molecular lasers, and physical gas dynamics. Over the last three decades, well over 100 students, post-doctoral researchers, and visiting scholars have worked at the NETL group, most of them recruited and advised by Bill. Several of them are currently heading well-known research groups in the US, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia.

For over 30 years, Bill has been my mentor, colleague, and close friend. He was a brilliant scientist who made groundbreaking advances in the development of molecular gas lasers, gas discharges, nonequilibrium reacting flows, and molecular energy transfer. For one of his discoveries in nonequilibrium thermodynamics of molecules exchanging vibrational energy, he and Charles Treanor had been nominated for a Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1992. This remarkable result, universally known as the Treanor distribution, remains a cornerstone of nonequilibrium vibrational kinetics, and can be compared with the work of Boltzmann and Gibbs.

Bill's intellectual pursuits also included English and American literature, of which he had a truly encyclopedic knowledge, as well as history, archeology, and book collecting. Over several decades, he accumulated an amazing library with many first editions of books written by the literary giants of XVIII and XIX centuries. He wrote a series of "Book Hunting Notes" for the Aldus Society, lovers of books and graphic arts, with photographs of stunningly beautiful books from his collection. His most recent essay, on the poetry of John Keats, appeared in their Winter 2022 newsletter. Bill wrote it in the fall of 2021, when he was already very sick but undeterred. He recited Keats' poems to me when we met to chat and exchange news.

Bill had a passion for the Ohio State football. Just a few weeks ago, when we watched the Rose Bowl together, he kept cheering me up when things did not look good for the Buckeyes (that is, during most of the game). It was really inspiring to see the Bucks rally at the end, just as he said they would.

But perhaps most importantly, Bill was the most noble, kind, patient, and generous person I have ever met. This is how he will be remembered by his children, his friends, and his colleagues. I owe him virtually everything that I have accomplished, and he will forever have my love and gratitude.

Igor Adamovich



Bill Rich (Right) Receiving the 2018 Carol Logue Biblio-fellowship Award from Then-Aldus Society President Harry Campbell (Left)

New Aldus Mailing Address

The new mailing address for Aldus is:

The Aldus Society
850 Twin Rivers Drive
Box 163518
Columbus, OH 43216



Program Recaps for February and March

Aldus Society audience members finally had the chance to get re-acquainted, with our return to live programs at the Thurber Center after two years of pandemic restrictions! It was also a chance to get re-acquainted with Ohioana through Executive Director David Weaver's February 10, 2022 program "Ohioana: Celebrating Ohio Literature." This was a very enthusiastic and informative review of award winning Ohio-based literature, and various Ohioana activities, over the past few years.

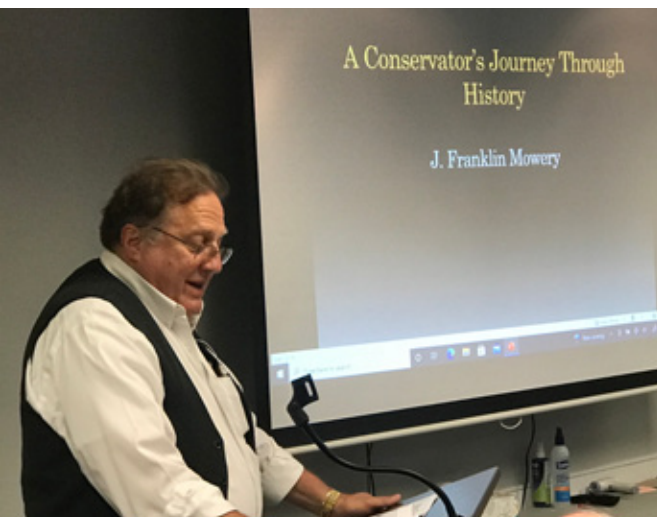


Jolie Braun is the Curator of Modern Literature and Manuscripts at the OSU Libraries Rare Books and Manuscript Library. Her March 10, 2022 program was a fascinating unfolding of "American Book Canvassing Samples" in OSU rare book collections. These late-19th and early-20th century samples were mock-ups of the range of physical features of the actual books that were being advertised. Potential customers could then place their orders with the "canvasser."

Recap: Frank Mowery Program, April 14, 2022

Aldus Society members and guests were witness to “A Conservator’s Journey through History,” the program at the Thurber Center on Thursday, April 14 by our guest speaker Frank Mowery. Frank, who retired a few years ago after 35 years as head of conservation at the Folger Shakespeare Library, traveled from Venice, FL, where he maintains a private conservation practice, to present a wonderful account of his conservation work, illustrated by many impressive before-and-after photos of books, paper and vellum artifacts from various places and centuries. His talk included a fascinating discussion of the “leaf casting” process in the restoration of badly damaged paper documents. A lively question and answer period ensued.

Thanks to the return of George Bauman, our photographer-at-large, here are a few pictures of the event! Enjoy the photos – it’s great to see our audience building again and joining in biblio-fellowship as we gradually continue our return from the pandemic shutdown.



May 12, 2022 Program at Thurber Center
Mingling and Refreshments at 7:00 pm
Program at 7:30 pm

Back Stage with Jeffrey Gress

Presenting the Remarkable History of
Theatrical Scenic Designer Mathias Armbruster:
Research and Resources Regarding the Study
of Armbruster's Theatrical Scenic Design Work
in Columbus and the Midwest

Mathias Armbruster was a pivotal figure in the growth of theater production not only in Columbus but throughout the Midwest after the Civil War through into the early 20th Century. He and his family operated a scenic studio on the bank of the Ohio Canal and German Village. After immigrating to this country in the late 1830s he served in the military, and painted stained glass before moving to Columbus from Cincinnati. The company he founded outlasted his life as his children carried on after his death. In the 1920's the Schell family bought out the business and has run the painted background and theatrical lighting company ever since.

Jeffrey Gress is a professor at Capital University in Columbus. For 15 years he has taught courses for theater technology while researching and publishing articles about the history of scenic design through the growth in the Midwest.



Mathias Armbruster

Surprise

By Tricia Herban

Once again I am hit on the head
By nuts of some kind.
And I am always surprised
By the attack - be it almonds
Or sunflowers, pecans or walnuts.
Why such hostility?
My only act is of kindness,
For freezing preserves their life,
Their lives—so many are they.

And they live comfortably,
With friendly sesame seeds
And plastic containers of pesto,
Homemade from summer's bounty.
They can chat with stored
Ginger root, peeled garlic and
Freshly washed fronds of dill.

My freezer is a trove
to be sure.
It represents hope,
the future:
Dishes imagined,
Meals to come,
Opportunities
for tomorrow.

**Armbruster
Studio Stage
Set**



Women Aldines Hold Monthly Lunch Meet-Up

All women members are invited to meet for lunch and “book talk” on the 4th Saturday of each month. Attending February’s meet-up were (clockwise from front left) Lisa Zierten, Christine Hayes, Pat Groseck, Tricia Herban, Cathy Bennett, Janet Ravneberg, and Sue Johnson. Recent book recommendations include *Pianos & Flowers: Brief Encounters of the Romantic Kind*, short stories by Alexander McCall Smith; *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*, a novel by Alison Pataki; *Chasing History: A Kid in the Newsroom*, by Carl Bernstein, and *The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World*, by Virginia Postrel.

Photo by Nancy Campbell



Booked to Die A Bookstore-y

By George Cowmeadow Bauman

Dedicated to the Memory of Bill Rich: A Bookman Extraordinaire

This is a story of hunting for an elusive book.

As a book dealer, over the years I’ve found, bought, and sold many wonderful books, special and/or beautiful books that would start your heart.

But this is the story of my *favorite* buy.

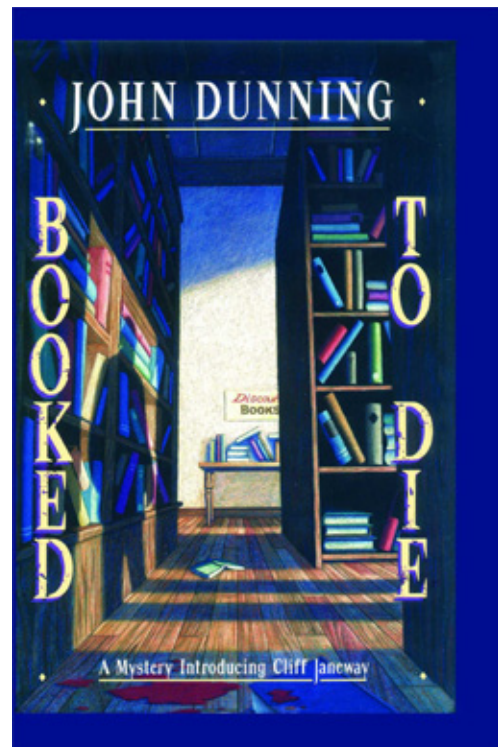
Since the 70s, I’ve collected books about bookselling, booksellers, and bookstores/bookshops. I blame it on Christopher Morley, the longtime book editor—and one of the founders of—*The Saturday Review of Literature*.

While in high school, my Aunt Peg Cowmeadow gave me an old copy of *The Haunted Bookshop* (1919) by Morley, which was the sequel to *Parnassus on Wheels* (1917).

Thanks to “Kit” Morley and Aunt Peg, I was hooked not only on books, but the people and stores that sold them as well.



By the early 80s, I had a growing collection of such bibliopolic material related to my profession. I was collecting not only bibliopolic fiction, of which there is an abundance, but also any non-fiction books about the



topic of selling books. Memoirs of booksellers, histories of specific bookshops, or how-tos—anything that featured the topic as its core subject.



After returning in 1985 from a difficult year behind the Iron Curtain in Romania, we bought our first computer, a bulky desktop Apple MacIntosh. Which enabled me—when Linda wasn't using it to write her dissertation for Pitt—to begin assembling *An Annotated Bibliography on the Literature of American Bookselling*. I haunted Pitt's Hillman library, researching my unique project. When traveling to bookstore conferences in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, I visited various university libraries looking for material to include; I also checked out many bookshops, asking for their Books about Books section, often getting a blank stare in return, but occasionally I'd find a treasure.

Otto Penzler at the Mysterious Bookshop in New York was kind enough to offer encouragement and promised to order copies when I finished the book I was now envisioning. As well, he scrounged around his stock and brought an armful of bibliopolic mystery books to me, most of which I hadn't known about, which I could add to the Fiction section of the project. He said that he was pleased to help as he'd never had such a request before.

At one point the American Bookseller Association offered to publish my bibliography, but without the annotations. I turned them down, seeing the annotations as deepening the significance of the listings, elevating the book above a mere listing of books on the topic.

My (unrealistic) goal was to acquire a copy of every title in my bibliography. It was a lot of fun scouring dealer catalogs, especially the ones from Bob Fleck's Oak Knoll Books, to whom I owe a lot for his many listings of books about the book biz, and especially for the bibliographic descriptions of each title. I created my bibliographic descriptions based on the way that Oak Knoll wrote theirs.

Once I started working full time again, initially at the Marquette University Book Marq and then at The Map Store here in Columbus, my time to research and write was diminished. And after I became the co-owner of the Acorn Bookshop, my bibliography languished.

But not my desire to acquire.



In 1992, John Dunning, a Denver book dealer, had a mystery novel published titled *Booked to Die*. In it, he introduced a Denver detective named Cliff Janeway, who was also a serious rare book collector. A book scout is murdered and Janeway is assigned the case, partially because he was very familiar with the book world of Denver. The book-oriented cop burns out, resigns, and opens a bookshop, but a past case follows and endangers him.

The reader learns much about the eccentric used-book biz; in Dunning's book, some of it was rather sleazy. The book is very noir-ish; by the end justice has been served, but the reader feels wrung out.

Booked to Die was an immediate, surprise hit. The first printing sold out in 48 hours! It went through several printings quickly as it began making news. First editions were going for \$50. And the price didn't stop there. \$100, \$200, \$300, and more. The book trade was all abuzz about the popularity of a book dealing with one of our own. And it won the prestigious Nero Wolfe award.

I bought a copy of *Booked to Die* at The Little Professor bookstore on Lane Avenue. It wasn't a first printing, maybe a second or third. I bought it anyway, read it soon after, and thus began my search for a *BTD* first. A first printing of the first edition in a dust jacket, both in VG (very good) to F (fine) condition, with no owner's name or marks anywhere on it. And certainly *not* a BCE (book club edition).



By the mid-90s, the price of *BTD* had soared to \$800! For those lucky enough to have bought it when it first came out, mostly for the topic, not for an investment, the title turned *into* an investment. Dealers I talked to all said something to the tune of, "Oh, man! I wish I'd bought a dozen of those books when it was published!" But who knew?!



Linda's family lives in Pittsburgh's urban suburb of Whitaker, high on a hill above the Monongahela River and the now-defunct Homestead Steel Works, where her grandfather was killed in a mill explosion in the 1920s.

We often drove the four-hour trip from Columbus to the 'Burgh to spend a weekend with them, and to persuade my mother-in-law to make some of her potato pancakes, called blinis in *her* mother's Lithuanian home.

Back then, Pittsburgh had several good secondhand bookshops. I'd drop Lin and her mother off at the iconic Kaufmann's department store downtown to shop, while I headed out to do some bookstore-bopping. They'd catch a bus home, so I didn't have to be concerned about lingering longer in the seductive aisles of book worlds... as I often did.

At the time of this story, 1995, I had been managing bookstores for about 30 years, so I had some serious mileage behind the counter, and a fairly good eye and memory for book titles and authors, especially bibliopolic literature.

I was then the General Manager of Nickleby's Bookstore Café in the Grandview area of Columbus. It was such a cool place that when Linda interviewed for her teaching position at Ohio State, the hiring committee took her to lunch at Nickleby's to impress her that Columbus was a with-it city.

I also had an independent book business called Cowmeadow Books, selling used books in Peddler's Village, an antiques and craft store in Upper Arlington.

So my booking in Pittsburgh was to find books I wanted personally and for Cowmeadow Books stock.

As I left the two women downtown, the used book emporiums called to me, where I'd be welcomed as a colleague and a customer. I would head first to City Books on the Southside, run by Ed Gelblum, a Jewish scholar who also taught at Duquesne, and who was a great storyteller—if you took the time away from browsing the long narrow shop to listen. He had two floors of books—the second floor accessed by a narrow, twisting wrought-iron staircase which led to Philosophy, Psychology, and Judaica—his specialties. I usually was able to find a few books for Cowmeadow Books.

Back in those days, we book dealers gave each other a 20% professional discount, which was a critical factor in determining what we bought.

From the Southside I drove over the Birmingham Bridge and headed out to Squirrel Hill, where we had lived while Linda was at Pitt. The Bookworm was owned by Toba and Joel Levinson, and part of a larger shop called Heads Together, which sold vinyl. Toba was the day-to-day manager of the bookshop, and was quite the character. When I first visited their mostly-paperback shop and told her I was aspiring to open a bookshop, her immediate response was, "Not in *this* neighborhood!"

I saved the best book neighborhood for last—Oakland. Gathered loosely around the university district were Pitt, Carnegie-Mellon, and Duquesne universities. Three good bookshops awaited, each with their own character.

Townsend Books on Henry Street was run by the quietly-personable husband and wife team of Neil and Beverly Townsend. The store wasn't very large, but they had assembled good stock priced reasonably, and I always carted a box or two out to my car. But not before visiting with the Townsends. We'd go out to lunch if I timed my arrival right. Books, booksellers, and a bite—a fine combination.

They had a small fireplace in the center of the store, with two large, comfortable chairs in front of it, which tempted the browser, but interfered with time spent in front of the shelves, head cocked sideways to look at titles which might end up in my purchase box.

From there I'd walk down to Caliban Books on Craig Street, owned by John Shulman. His was a small shop with very good stock, usually priced beyond what I could afford and still turn a profit, but I enjoyed studying what he had. He had been on *Antiques Roadshow*, serving as an expert on printed material.

John was not garrulous, which in my experience was the exception, as most dealers were only too happy to talk with a colleague.

You may be familiar with his name, for he became national news. He and Gregory Priore—who oversaw the University of Pittsburgh's special collection of rare books, manuscripts, plates, and other valuable material—were discovered to have stolen and sold, over a period of 20 years, eight million dollars' worth of very expensive maps and other manuscript material, including a 1787 book signed by President Thomas Jefferson, and Newton's *Principia*, worth \$900,000.

They were both convicted, but amazingly, instead of prison time, they received several years of house arrest!

Caliban Books is no more.

The final book-stop in Oakland was the store I most looked forward to visiting—the Bryn Mawr Vassar bookstore on Winthrop Street, a large Victorian house with six large rooms stuffed with books. It was one of several bookshops—most on the East Coast—which were administered by the Bryn Mawr Vassar Association. All profits went to scholarships. Every book they stocked was donated, and all the work was done by volunteers—mostly senior women, so there was little overhead, other than the rent and utilities. Being in the university area, they were given many good quality books, as well, of course, popular titles of recent years; and as is the case with all used bookstores, many really crappy books were left on their doorstep. There was a sense of dusty-mustiness, even if the books weren't actually dirty, though the thin old carpets were.

The real draw for book-buyers was the price they put on most of their books: \$1-6. So I could raid the place and pack my '89 Accord with three or four boxes of books. Often I was there till closing time, when the woman at the front desk would slowly climb the creaky wooden steps to kindly remind us browsers of their imminent closing. I usually brought an armload of books down as I found them, so that the cashier—too elegant a term for the blue-haired woman with knitting in her lap sitting next to a cigar cash-box at an old wooden desk—could add them up and keep a running total so that she didn't have to total the books if I brought them all down at closing time, forcing her to stay longer beyond door-locking time.

The bonus of the Bryn Mawr Vassar store was the large white poster-board sign in the window next to their door on the stoop at the top of a few cement steps. In large black letters they'd proclaim that for that month, all books in a certain numbered room would be 50% off the marked price. They had so many books donated to them that it was the only way to keep making room for incoming stock. For example, the sign one month might say that all books in Room 2 were on sale. Most customers would beeline to that main-floor room to start their browsing. Room 2 was where they stocked mass market paperbacks, and over the years I had bought a number of vintage biblio-mysteries dead cheap. Or the designated room might be Room 8, where they shelved book with subjects that didn't lend themselves to easy categorization, such as sociology and anthropology and current issues.

If they really were overloaded with stock, they might announce a sale in not one, but two of their rooms.



And such was the case that wonderful day when I saw, "50% off all Books in Rooms 3 & 4." I knew those to be the locations of Fiction and Mystery, the categories I bought the most, where I would slow down, pull a nearby dairy crate over to sit on, and take my time browsing. Getting those volumes for 50% off the already cheap prices was going to be a profitable pleasure. I climbed the

stairs, took a left, and went right to the mysteries.

As always, in addition to looking for books to sell, I was on the alert for titles I knew related to fictional bookstore representations. I knew of many of them, but I often discovered new-to-me titles, a real joy.

I always came into that store—and all others—with John Dunning in mind. Someday, maybe that day, I was hoping to come across a first edition of *Booked to Die*.

I was feeling a good vibe as I settled onto the diary crate to begin at the front of the alphabet, intending a slow, concentrated appraisal of the entire section.

The first bibliopolic mystery I came across that afternoon was Isaac Asimov's *Murder at the ABA*. The ABA stood for the American Booksellers Association, which annually held the largest trade convention in the US in various cities. I loved attending them; they were a festival of books and booksellers, publishers and hoopla, authors and signings. Seeing *Murder at the ABA* brought a smile to my face; it was the first book of that afternoon's search to be set aside for purchase.

Next, I found a mint condition of *Chapters and Verse: Fiction from Behind the Counter* by Joel Barr, one of the best fictional representations of what it was like to work in a bookstore. I had a copy of this, but I intended to give this one as a gift to some colleague down the road.

It was looking good so far, just in that first floor-to-ceiling darkwood bookcase.

And there *Booked to Die* was! I couldn't tell whether it was a trade edition or a book club edition as it sat there on the shelf, and I wasn't going to rush this at all. I wanted to preserve the moment.

Visually I cased the book. It seemed to be the height of a trade copy, not the smaller BCE size. But was it a first? My heart was pounding with the possibility.

At the time, a first of *BTB* was going for \$600, and BMV kept their more expensive books—such as they were—in the downstairs showcase. So I thought the chances of the book in front of me being a first were slim. It probably was a second or third printing these three years after having been published.

Time to find out.

Carefully I pulled the book from between its two shelved neighbors. I turned it over and checked out the condition of the dust jacket on the outside. Fine. I took the dj off and looked at its inside, hoping to see the publisher's original price of \$19.95 on the flap. It was there, unclipped. I examined the navy boards with black spine: front, back, spine, corners. Fine. My excitement was really building.

I opened the cover to the front endpaper, looking for an owner's signature or any other markings which would devalue the book; all was clean. I turned to the title page.

I paused a moment more, for I was going to be extremely elated, or seriously disappointed with the turn of the next page, looking for Scribner's statement of edition. I wanted to see that the line of numbers indicating how many printings there had been, began with a "1." I took a moment to look around to see if there were any browsers in the room. Nada. I took a deep breath.

Showtime. Time for the big reveal.



Holy shit!! There it was! I was holding a mint-condition, first edition *Booked to Die* in my hands! Holy Mackerel! Wowza! My heart was racing, my hands were trembling. For me, this was the Holy Grail of bibliopolic literature. My pot of gold.

And speaking of gold, I hadn't even considered what the price was going to be. I didn't care. Maybe whoever prices the books there knew it was valuable and I'd be writing a serious check. On the other hand, whatever the price was, it was going to be 50% off! And I was going to buy it.

So I turned back to the endpaper, prepared for anything.

\$4 was lightly penciled there. I checked closely to make sure it wasn't \$400, but no, it was \$4.

Which meant that I was going to get this \$600 jewel of a book for just \$2!

Suddenly, inexplicably, I was very nervous. Ignoring the other books I had intended to buy, I oh-so-carefully carried this book downstairs to the check-out woman. I was worried that as she checked the price, she might say something like, "Oh, no, this book isn't four dollars. It's much more expensive than that, but I'll have to check with Lillian on Monday to make sure of the right price. Can you come back next week?" Seriously, I was certain something would go wrong, and I wouldn't get this book.

Cautiously I set the book down in front of name-tagged Martha, saying that I'd found it Room 2, so she said, "That'll be two dollars please."

I handed a fiver to her and said, "Please keep the change. It's worth that much to me."

"Thank you," she smiled, unaware of my extreme agitation. "We have a number of customers that support us in that manner. If you want a bag, help yourself to one of those in the corner."

I wrapped my precious in a plastic bag, put it down inside a carrying bag and hurried out to my car, telling the woman that I'd be back, but I had to get something from my car. I wanted to get that sucker out of that store and into my locked car before doing any other shopping, and before she could call out that the book shouldn't have been in the half-price room. I sat behind the wheel caressing my new prize, before going back in.

An hour later, I stopped browsing after pulling two boxes of books, though there were thousands of books yet to be looked at. I was too excited about *Booked to Die* to hang around any longer. I wanted to get back to my in-laws and show Linda what I'd found.

And pour myself a tall, celebratory beverage. Or two.

And that is the story of my favorite book buy: finding a first edition of Dunning's *Booked to Die*, which sits beside me as I write.

I've never seen a copy since.

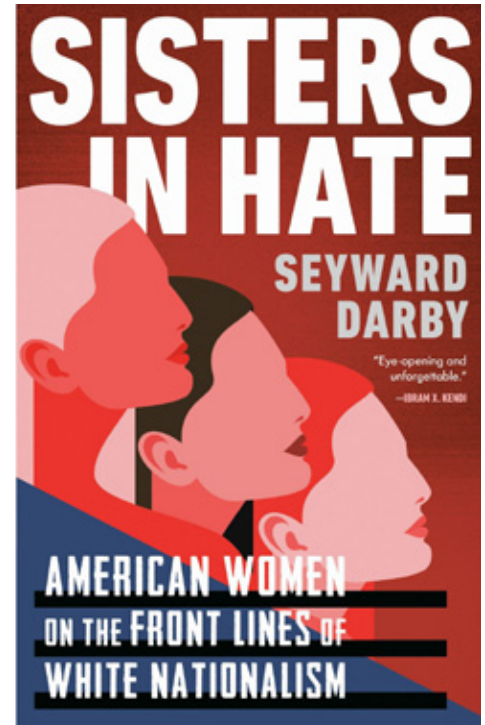
Book Review—*Sisters in Hate*

Review by Tricia Herban

Although decidedly not a work of eloquent prose, the book *Sisters in Hate: American Women on the Front Lines of White Nationalism* is an important book in the same way that Ta-Nehisi Coate's *We Were Eight Years in Power* or Ibram E. Kendi's *Stomped* are important reading for our time. Author Seyward Darby has chosen to follow Corinna, Ayla and Lana as they evolve from frustrated young women who feel that they don't belong in the families and environments that have raised them. A gradual, but predictable progression into white nationalism becomes apparent by the time we read the third life story in this book.

Unlike Isabel Wilkerson's masterful account of the great migration, *The Warmth of Other Sons*, this book does not limit itself to telling one story at a time. Rather, it employs the now-popular style of interspersing two narratives. First is the story of each woman's radicalization. Second is a very useful although, somewhat subsumed, social history of women's rights. It is these dual threads that make this book an important but not literary work. By itself, either would be less significant, but combined, they convey a compelling tale of the use of alt media to reach an astoundingly large and receptive audience. Full disclosure: I hated this book, but could not put it down! Words like Lana's statement to her followers were riveting: "It's okay to think like us. If you do, there's a whole tribe here that you can join of girls that actually have your back (page 226)."

So why should you read this book? To better understand your world, our world, the world of violent anger that so surprised many of us when it seemingly appeared out of nowhere in events like the January 6th insurrection. Author Darby tells readers: "I wanted to write a text that was urgent but empathetic, angry but grounded." She says "The vitriol of hate groups is not so much an aberration as a reaffirmation of racist and gendered views that permeate society. It began with slavery and extermination of native people, endured in the wake of the civil war. It conceals itself in the false promise of Christian kindness, race blindness and e pluribus unum. White nationalism is not a monolith but it is an outlook defined by binary thinking and perceived victimization (pages 7-11)."



Sisters in Hate: American Women on the Front Lines of White Nationalism by Seyward Darby, Little Brown and Company, 2020, 309 pages.

From the Archives: Book Hunting Notes 28a (Originally Printed in 2015)

By Bill Rich

Previously owned by...

When a book collector casts a fairly broad net, and has collected for a number of years, chances are good for finding books with inscriptions showing they have passed through the hands of well-known people. Indications of ownership by someone in my personal pantheon are mighty gratifying. In such cases, it is most welcome if the book is from their personal library; lessor preference is given to books inscribed by an author to an unknown person; due to modern book-signing campaigns publishers arrange for authors, this is very common in modern first editions. Here are a few examples I cherish among my books:

Agnes Repplier

This grand lady of American belles lettres was born in Philadelphia in 1855 and lived there all her life, dying at the ripe age of 95. I think she was one of the greatest American essayists (maybe Mencken was better), although she seems somewhat forgotten these days. Her first essay (on Ruskin) appeared in 1884, and she was first published in *The Atlantic* in 1886; after this, a long series of her writings appeared over many decades.



Fig. 1 Agnes Repplier

The first book of her collected essays, *Books and Men*, was published in 1888. She published nineteen books after this, the last, *Eight Decades*, appearing in 1937. She never married, remaining in the Catholic Church until she died. Fig. 1 is a photo of the lady in her prime. If all of this suggests a merely prim and proper blue-stockings lady, it is misleading. Agnes, a very rebellious young woman, was kicked out of more than one convent school when in her teens. At age sixteen (in 1871, mind you), she was caught smoking Benson and Hedges cigarettes, a habit she maintained until her death. Of course, this and other authority-questioning behavior was too much for the nuns. She remained a sardonic, questioning person all her life, who seldom tolerated fools gladly. In her later life, at the height of her fame, she was interviewed by a gushing young admirer, who went on interminably. The interview came to an abrupt end when the woman said "There is something else I meant to say, but I have forgotten what it was." Repplier answered "Perhaps, my dear, it was 'Good-bye.'"

I have long collected her essays in their published book form. The observations in them are trenchant and wonderful.

A few of my favorites are:

- "It's not easy to find happiness in ourselves, and it's not possible to find it elsewhere."
- "We cannot really love anybody with whom we never laugh."
- "People who cannot recognize a palpable absurdity are very much in the way of civilization."

And wisdom for this book collector:

- "It is in his pleasure that a man really lives; it is from his leisure that he constructs the true fabric of self."

The lady was fond of cats, and again, I identify with her in this. I recommend her book *The Fireside Sphinx*, from which come:

- "A kitten is chiefly remarkable for rushing about like mad at nothing whatever, and generally stopping before it gets there."

And:

- "It is impossible for a lover of cats to banish these alert, gentle, and discriminating friends who give us just enough of their regard and complaisance to make us hunger for more."

Our lady was a great European traveler, who wrote extensively of the writers and artists of the Western World. She was an admirer of Ruskin and the aesthetic movement in general. Walter Pater, one of the founders of the aesthetic movement, was the subject of a very early Repplier essay. I collect Pater's books in first edition – they often sold at only a used-book price. In a used book store in Syracuse, NY, I picked up such a book for \$2.95 in 1982. This is Pater's *Greek Studies*. An industrial town in

Western New York is far from the aesthetic movement or ancient Greek culture, always excepting the town's famous name. But my book had been given as a gift to one of Agnes's friends in far-away Florence, Italy – a book chosen by my author for a meaningful gift in the greatest of all Renaissance cities (Fig. 2). Books have their histories, and I wish this one could speak – it came to me almost a hundred years and more than 4000 miles from the time and place of the inscription. But a book that truly "passed through the hands of" one of my favorite writers.

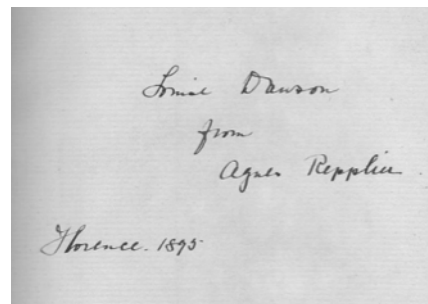


Fig. 2 A Gift from Agnes

John Carter and Graham Pollard

These two men achieved immortality in the book collecting world by their classic exposure of the forgeries of the infamous Thomas Wise. Wise was the dominant figure in the English book collecting world in the early decades of the twentieth century; his collection of the great Victorian writers and poets was the envy of all. Wise published bibliographies of many major Victorian and Romantic poets—bibliographies that are still used (with caution!) to this day. But Wise devised a fraudulent scheme to supplement his book-collecting income: he invented short, printed "pre-firsts" of some of the most popular nineteenth-century poets. These purported to be poems that were privately printed by the authors prior to formal publication, presumably for circulation and criticism from a select circle of friends. The practice was not unknown at the time; there are authentic examples. But Wise went whole hog, forging Browning, Tennyson, Ruskin, Eliot, and so on, and leaking them out into the book market where they were snapped up by collectors (often, rich Americans) as extreme and costly rarities.

Carter and Pollard were young English rare book dealers in the early 1930s when they developed suspicions of these Wise "pre-firsts" which they encountered. A magnificent work of literary, historical, and typological research followed, culminating in the 1934 publication of their *Inquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*. This was essentially the end of Wise's career. Both Carter and Pollard went on to become prominent in the book collecting world, John Carter, in particular, authoring many book collecting books. These include his *ABC for Book-Collectors*, which remains in print today, and, also, what I regard as the best general book on book collecting ever, his *Taste and Technique in Book-Collecting*.

Carter was a trans-Atlantic book dealer, working for many years with the great David Randall at Scribner's rare book department, and supplying books for American book collectors in the glory days of book collecting in

the United States. Notably, they bought books for Eli Lilly, whose library is the foundation collection at the University of Indiana. Randall became the first Lilly librarian there.

Among my books on book collecting and on book forgeries and their exposés are many of Carter's books, which I cherish. But it was in the course of other collecting pursuits that I encountered two books, one each from the personal libraries of John Carter and Graham Pollard. These were not found in totally unexpected places. Somerset Maugham's *Cakes and Ale*, the famous hatchet job on Thomas Hardy, came from Randall House in California. It is a very good first state of the London 1930 first edition, but lacks the dust jacket. It has the small book label of John and Ernestine Carter (Fig. 4). This is not unexpected, since the Randall

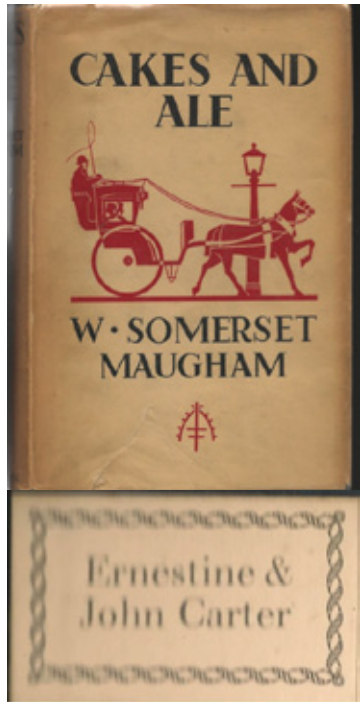


Fig. 4 *Cakes and Ale*

House proprietor was none other than Ron Randall, the son of David Randall, Carter's colleague. (In the interest of full disclosure, let me note that the fine dust jacket on the copy illustrated came from a second state copy bought at Hoffman's Book Shop here in Columbus. The authoritative bibliography of the Rothschild Maugham collection shows photos of the first state jacket, entirely identical to the one I have supplied, in defiance of the views of purists. I paid Ed Hoffman three and a half times the price of the unjacketed first state copy I bought from Randall. Such is the price of this flimsy piece of paper in the minds of avid "modern first edition"

collectors. But the collector can please himself. Let the sin of performing this illegal marriage, if sin there be, fall on me and my children.) The Graham Pollard book (Fig. 5) is his copy of a first edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*, London, 1889. I have a pretty good Stevenson collection, and was happy to find this great novel at Magg's Book Shop in London. Despite the extreme upscale status of the vendor, I find that I paid only £15 in 1979 and took it back to the U.S. rejoicing, not the least because it has Graham Pollard's book label. It is rather gratifying to share interests in English

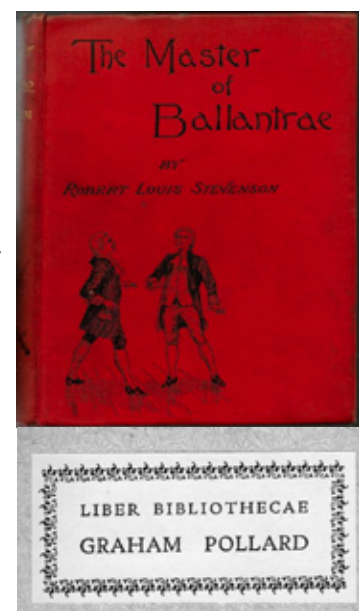


Fig. 5 *The Master of Ballantrae*

novels with two book men of taste and discrimination. Note that both book labels as shown are very small, each less than 1 x 2 inches. It is an old observation that the greater the book man, the smaller is his book label.

Charles Dickens

In his later prosperity, Dickens realized a youthful ambition and bought Gad's Hill Place, a mansion near Rochester; this was the house in which he died in 1870. He had a good-sized library, which was sold at auction the same year. The library was dispersed, and relatively few of the books are traceable today. They can be identified by his bookplate, showing his crest of a couchant lion. The auctioneer also added a label identifying the book as coming from the Gads Hill library.

Fig. 6 shows one such book, the title page and the front pastedown with the aforementioned plates. The

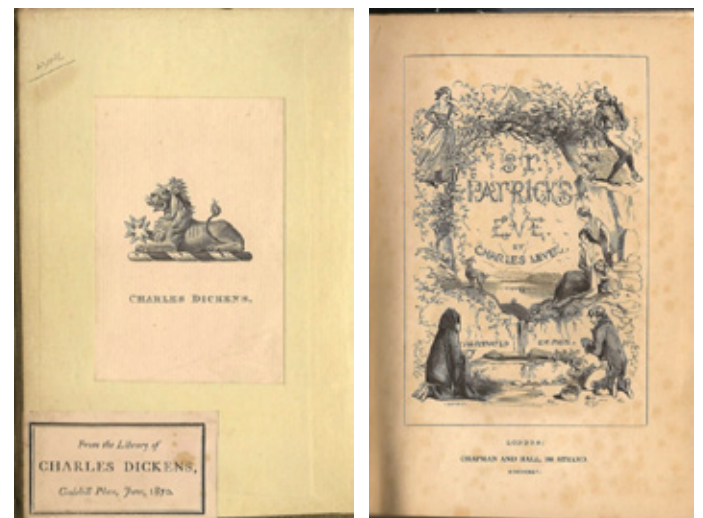


Fig. 6 Charles Dickens' *St Patrick's Eve*

book is the first edition of a novel by Charles Lever, *St. Patrick's Eve*, London, 1865. The illustrations are by Hablot Browne, "Phiz," who was also one of Dickens' illustrators. Lever's novels were hugely popular in the day, and were mostly of Irish life. I find them readable, and collect them along with now more famous Victorians. But, in this case, unlike the previous examples discussed above, I bought the book not for my Lever collection (I already owned a copy). I freely confess it was for the sake of owning a book from Dickens own library, a book that was "previously owned by" and, I hope, read by the great man. This came from Brick Row Books in San Francisco, and, I suspect, ninety percent of the price was due to the evidence of a certain previous ownership. But, what the heck, book collecting is a thing of the spirit anyway.

