

## Whose Boke is Thys?

Summer Special Issue:  
light reading for beach or  
hammock

Paul Ruxin

For those to whom bibliography is an irrelevancy or an unknown, the name David Fleeman will mean nothing. For the rest it must mean a great deal—short-hand, perhaps, for the gold standard. David Fleeman's 1994 magisterial (there really is no other right word) *Bibliography of the Works of Samuel Johnson* begins with 44 introductory pages, followed by 1758 pages of text, with an additional 147 pages of "Works Consulted," 62 pages of chronologic listings, and a 99 page index. Fleeman knew more about books by, about, and related to Johnson than anyone else. And he physically examined more of them than anyone else. In 1984 Fleeman published *A Preliminary Handlist of Copies of Books Associated with Dr. Samuel Johnson*. This work, he wrote, derived from notes he had made about the books actually used by Johnson in the preparation of his great *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). The *Handlist* is divided into two parts, the second being a list of books of "doubtful and erroneous attributions to Johnson and his personal library"; but as to the first part Prof. Fleeman tells us, "when books are located they have usually been examined, and of such items it is possible to be more confident."

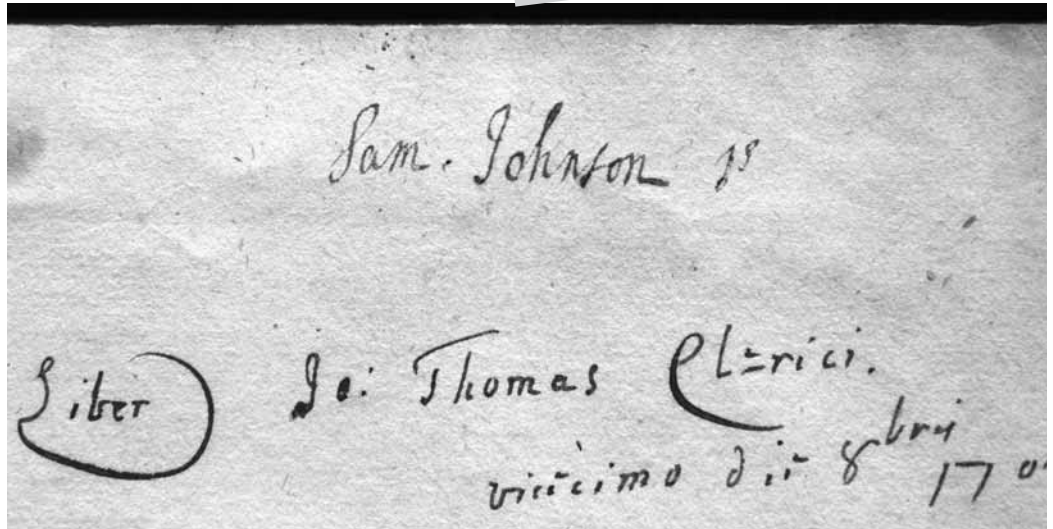
Item No. 84 of the first part of the *Handlist* reads this way:

HOBBS, Thomas  
Leviathan . . . London: Andrew Cooke.  
1651.fol.

Inser: '1698'

Inser: 'Liber Jo: Thomas Clerica  
vicesimo die 8bris 1704'

Inser: 'Sam.Johnson. 1s'



The inscription in question

Inser: 'William Beckford  
Dunsland Devon'

Parke-Bernet (deCoppet), 16 Feb 1955,  
29- 70 Indiana State University Library

Just to be sure it is clear, Dr. Fleeman is here describing Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the copy owned and inscribed by Samuel Johnson. And it is not placed in the "doubtful" section of his *Handlist*, but up front where he asserts greater confidence that a particular book actually belonged to Johnson. Fleeman's list also indicates that his research has identified only 284 books with a connection to Johnson, of which 158 were then (1984) in institutions, 97 unlocated and 29 in private hands. Books with Johnson's ownership signature are even more rare. According to Fleeman, there are only 38 extant. Of the 29 books known to have been in Johnson's private library and now privately held, one included by Fleeman in his *Handlist* (in fact authenticated by him in a lengthy letter tracing its provenance), is *Hermes*, by James Harris, already safely on my own shelf.

In May of 2002 I had a call from the dis-

tinguished Twin Cities book-seller Rob Rulon-Miller. David Vancil, the Curator of the Cordell Collection of Dictionaries at Indiana State University, had asked Rulon-Miller to sell Johnson's copy of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, in order to "use the proceeds to beef up the Cordell Fellowship funding." Would I, Mr. Rulon-Miller asked, be interested? While catching my breath I pulled Fleeman's *Handlist* from my shelf and quickly located No. 84, the number assigned by Fleeman to this particular *Leviathan* of a book. My next words, even before, I believe, "How much," were "Of course." And so the book came to me. Despite the title page advertising it to be printed by Andrew Crooke in London in 1651, it was immediately clear from the printer's devices on that page as Fleeman himself noted, that it was not a true first of the *Leviathan*, but, in fact, a third, the Amsterdam edition of about 1680. No matter to me. I do not collect Hobbes, but Johnson, and this was Johnson's book. Dr. Fleeman said so.

See SIGNATURE, page 2



# CAXTONIAN

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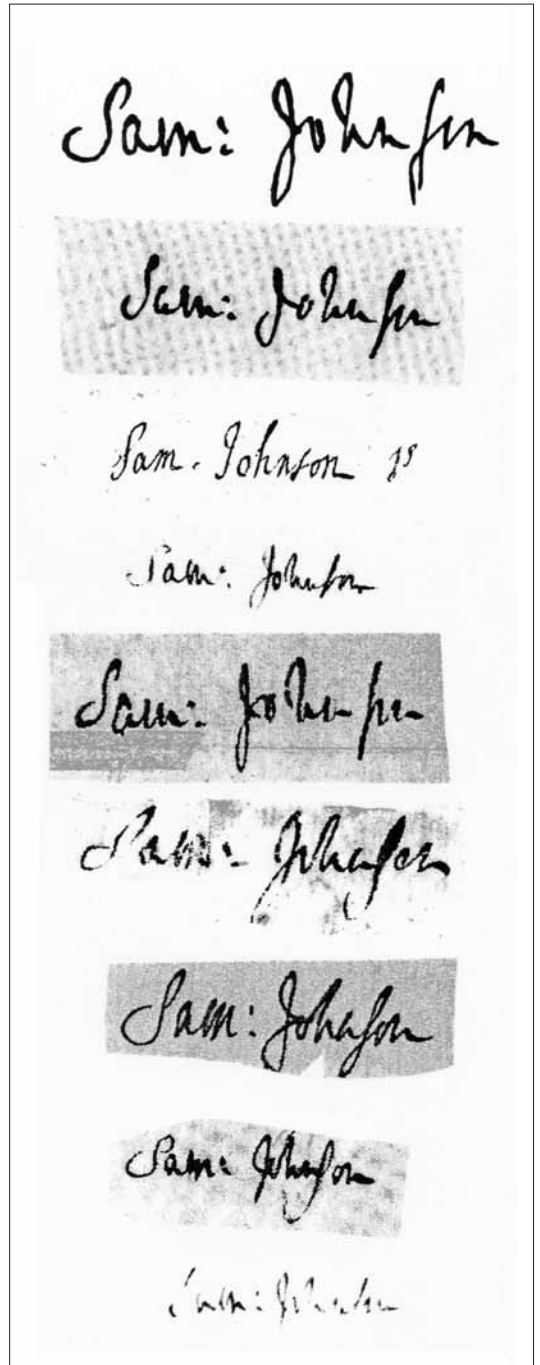
## SIGNATURE, from page 1

Looking at the glorious signature after the initial euphoria had passed I felt a slight twinge of something—discomfort, doubt, *je ne sais quoi*. Yes, that surely was authentic, wasn't it? A few days passed. Without exactly knowing why, I looked at my unquestionably authentic letters from Johnson, with his unquestionably authentic signatures. I glanced at a few facsimiles in other books I own. His signature, as all of ours do, too, varies; no two are exactly the same. A wave of something passed over me—not exactly relief, but close. "Close enough for government work," as the saying goes.

Peace of mind was fleeting. A few months later, Richard Kuhta, the Eric Weinmann Librarian of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., contacted me. He was curating an exhibit there to be called "Thys Boke Is Myne," taken from an inscription by Henry VIII of England in his own schoolboy copy of Cicero. The exhibit would display "association" copies of books of interest, mostly from the Folger collection (including good King Henry's). Might I have an interesting association copy or two I would be willing to lend to the exhibition, to be on display November of 2002 through February of 2003, Mr. Kuhta inquired? Yes, of course, I said. And so, with another book of mine, my *Leviathan* traveled to Washington.

A few weeks later an ominous e-mail arrived from Mr. Kuhta: "Would it bother you to know our Curator of Manuscripts questions Fleeman's attribution? . . . she suspects Fleeman never saw the book. She showed me a number of photocopies of Johnson's signature . . . and none of them match the signature in your copies. Would you like to hear her case?" What choice was there, after all? In any event I was feeling slightly more confident than I had before. Fortuitously both the late Prof. Gwin Kolb of the University of Chicago (Caxtonian and eminent Johnsonian) and Prof. Robert DeMaria of Vassar (an equally eminent Johnsonian) were in my library recently, and both were of the opinion that the signature probably was authentic, allowing for normal variations in handwriting. After all, the two of them had probably seen as much of Johnson's handwriting as any two people then living. Good enough for them, I thought, good enough not only for government, but certainly for me, and for Folger too.

But the Folger's Curator of Manuscripts is Heather Wolfe, and her predecessor is Laetitia Yeandle. If there are more objective, more thor-



Signature in question (third from top) with a selection of authenticated Johnson signatures supplied to the author by the Folger library, reproduced xero-graphically and here retouched

ough, more careful, more expert, examiners of manuscripts and handwriting than these two they remain unknown, and deservedly so. The case Dr. Wolfe made was what one should expect from her, objective, thorough, careful and expert. Compared to eight other examples of Johnson's signature, she wrote:

. . . the *Leviathan* signature is the only one that does not use a colon after "Sam." In his preface



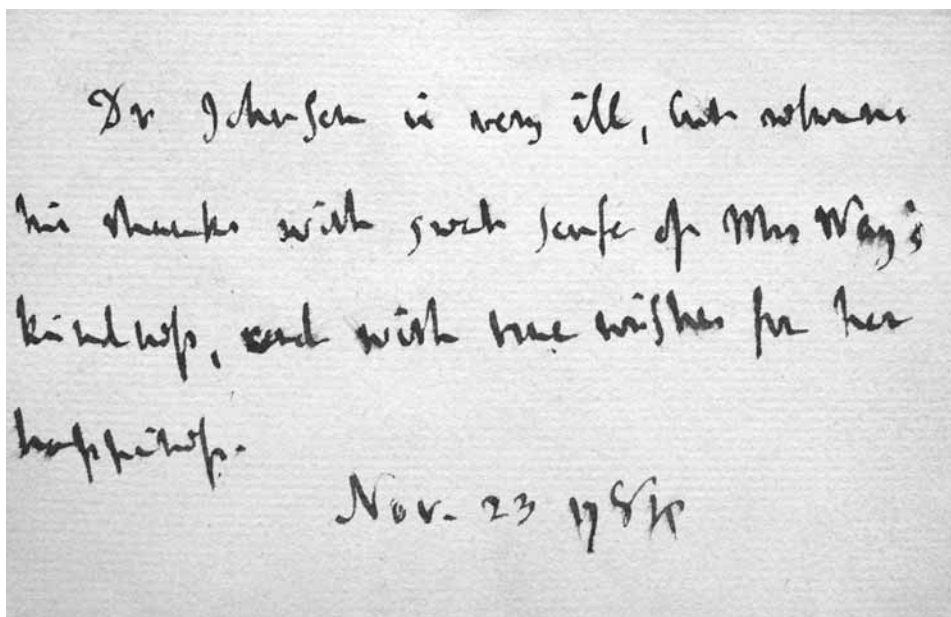
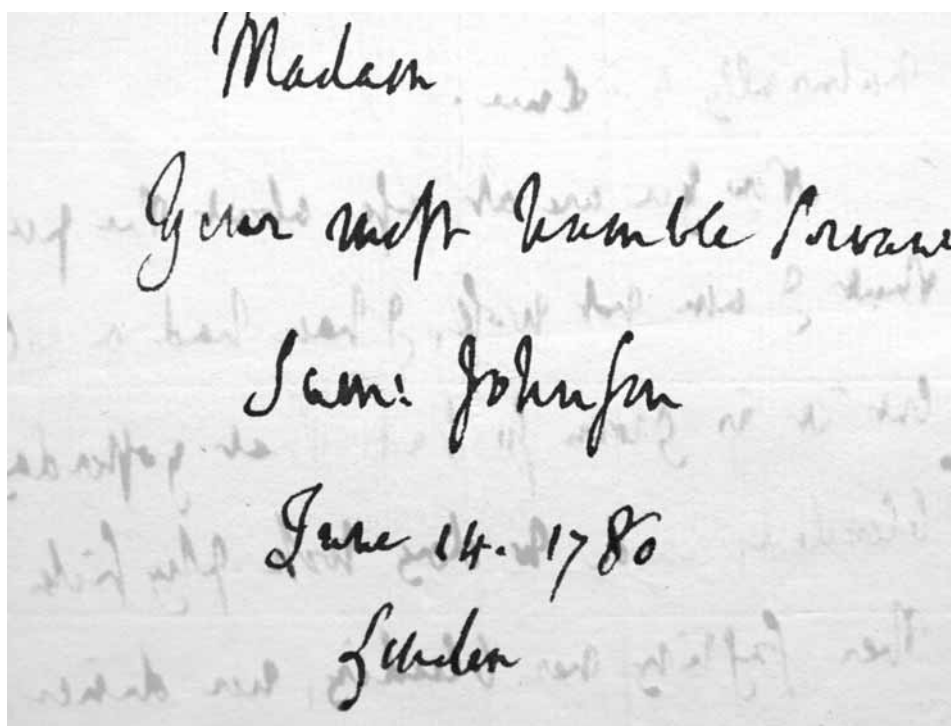
to [the *Handlist*] . . . Dr. Fleeman notes that Johnson's "normal signature is 'Sam Johnson' with a colon following the 'Sam' and a long 's' in 'Johnson.' Only one genuine autograph signature varies from that standard." The one variant Fleeman cites is not No. 84, the *Leviathan* copy, but No. 94, which is signed "Sl. Johnson, Translator, 24 yrs." Other differences are also apparent. The *Leviathan* signature is the only one on the attached page in which the "J" and "s" do not descend below the line. It is also the only signature in which the "loop" or "bulb" on the "h" is to the right instead of the left. The overall flow of the signature is stilted compared to the other examples.

She concluded, and Laetitia Yeandle agreed, "that the differences are significant enough to cast doubt on whether the signature belongs to Samuel Johnson 1709-1784 or to another Samuel Johnson."

And of course there were lots of others. The *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (to 1751) and the *Alumni Oxonienses* (through 1886) list more than two dozen Samuel Johnsons who might conceivably have owned this book after Joseph Thomas, Clerk, who signed it in 1704. And, there is nothing in the Parke-Bernet sale catalogue to support the assertion there that it is "the authentic signature of Dr. Samuel Johnson on the first fly-leaf."

I called Gwin Kolb, who looked again, and was unshaken in his view that this particular John Hancock was more likely than not the real thing. And I called Rob Rulon-Miller. I believe he then consulted with Mr. Vancil at Indiana State, who had no further information, but, according to Rob Rulon-Miller, would take the book back if I were dissatisfied and wished to return it. Rulon-Miller also sent along a photocopy of yet another Johnson letter, with a signature indeed closer to that in the *Leviathan* than are those in Dr. Wolf's (or my own) examples. Uncertainty thus reigned.

What we do know is that Johnson despised Hobbes, whom he regarded as "morally dangerous," and of the 114,000 or so illustrative quotations attached to the definitions in Johnson's *Dictionary*, none are from Hobbes, although more than a few are from the now almost unknown John Bramhall. An enemy of both Hobbes and his philosophy of determinism and its promotion of the Manichean heresy, all anath-



Two other Johnson autographs from the author's collection

ema to Johnson, Bramhall is remembered today only because Johnson quoted him extensively. We can safely assume Johnson read Hobbes before making up his mind against him. The *Leviathan* was a seminal book, from its first publication. Unlike many of today's critics, whose opinions are often uninformed by personal knowledge, Johnson knew well that which he despised. And if Johnson had most certainly read the *Leviathan*, he equally certainly likely owned it. Few who knew him would lend books to a man so notoriously hard on them, and it

is unlikely he sat in a university library reading it.

Nor can we conclude anything from the absence of a copy of the *Leviathan* in the *Sale Catalogue of Samuel Johnson's Library* (1785). As Prof. Fleeman points out, "the catalogue is an imperfect one which does little justice to the three thousand volumes which were sold off in 663 lots." That catalogue, however unworthy, does show two volumes of Hobbes' *Thucydides*, and we

See SIGNATURE, page 4

SIGNATURE, from page 3

might assume that if Johnson owned this lesser Hobbesian effort, he might even more certainly have owned the *Leviathan*. It is also true that in his will he left to certain enumerated persons “each a book at their election,” and we have no way of knowing who took what, or indeed what Johnson gave away during the course of his long life, in which he shared his passion for literature and dislike of Hobbes with his many friends.

I could, of course, go to the great Hyde collection of Johnson material at Harvard, where the vast majority of his surviving letters are lodged, and compare hundreds—thousands—of signatures with the one in the *Leviathan*. Or I could return the book. I did neither. For many years the book world has believed that this is indeed Samuel Johnson’s copy of *Leviathan*. Fleeman, Kolb, DeMaria, veritable giants in the world of Johnson scholarship, agreed. The evidence

against it, although reasonable, was less than conclusive. In the end I elected to accept the final judgment reflected in the Folger exhibition “Thys Boke is Myne.” It was placed in the final display case—titled “Thys Boke is Myne?” And the descriptive card read this way:

Books from Dr. Johnson’s library are rare, and signed copies are extraordinary as Johnson was known for not marking his books. David Fleeman estimates as few as thirty-eight books carry Johnson’s signa-

ture, so this copy of Hobbes’ most famous work—a work Johnson is likely to have owned—is at present, the subject of close scrutiny. At issue is the degree to which the signature *Sam Johnson* varies from known examples of his handwriting. Did this book belong to the famous Dr. Johnson, or to another Samuel Johnson?

We will never know. But I will never let this book go, because whether this book was Dr. Johnson’s or not, “thys boke is myne.”

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We sadly note the passing of  
**James Marshall ’78**  
on April 1, 2006. A remembrance  
will appear in a future issue.

We sadly note the passing of  
**Rupert Wenzel ’67**  
on July 7, 2006. A remembrance  
will appear in a future issue.

MORRELL SHOEMAKER, from page 7

around the corner on Clark Street were two book stores, the Economy, and the Central. And the Central Bookstore was a very fine bookstore, and they had on the fifth floor their rare books.” He would go “in there a couple of times a week to see what they had.”

In addition to visiting bookstores, Shoemaker found that “a lot of people have a lot of history and such that they’ve inherited and never been much interested in.” But his friends and neighbors knew or guessed his interests; two women he knew who were moving to Wisconsin had some books to get rid of, including a copy Burnham’s *Plan of Chicago*—“You’re an architect, you might be interested in these.” The economic and demographic circumstances of post-War “white flight” meant there were also plenty of strangers looking for people to take their books. “You’d come around at noon and there’d be station wagons outside the bookstores and they’d just have brought a whole house full of stuff. The guys would be out there just barking, ‘Fifty cents! Fifty cents! Fifty cents!’ I bought a first edition of Willa Cather and things like that for fifty cents—because they were moving and didn’t want to take all these books.”

“There was a plethora of Chicago authors, and I didn’t know anything about Chicago authors. I had bought a book—I can’t tell you the professor who wrote it, he was from Michigan—a very good book on the writers from Chicago from about 1880 to 1930. So I started a little collection of Chicago authors: Dreiser, Henry Blake Fuller, and people like that, that I still have.”

“When I got enough money, I rented a coach house over in Old Town. There were several architects over there I got to know. They were very interested in Chicago history.” Their interest fueled his interest.

“I did get interested in the Newberry when they first talked of having a book fair. I don’t know quite how I heard of it—I don’t know who asked me if I would work on it—but I ended up setting the first book fair up. I didn’t work on collecting the books or pricing them, but they had nobody to set the thing up.”

“Nathalie Alberts really founded it. She had two women who worked under her. They had no way—they were just starting to build the Annex, and they gave us the East Room, and that’s where we had the book fair in just the one room.”

“That was a lot of work. Physical work. But it was very, very rewarding, because I

learned so much from the people who came in and priced and talked about books, and sorted books. I went out and collected lots of books.”

“I like the Newberry very much. It’s pulled people of very diverse, varied backgrounds together, and everybody gets along; there’s very little one-upsmanship. The junior librarians know more than the people who own the expensive books. So there’s a trade-off there.”

“I think it’s carried over into the Caxton Club, which is very much the same way. You don’t know who may own what or nothing, but they all have something in common, and they all learn from each other, and they’re all sociable to each other, and they don’t say, ‘Well, you can’t sit at our table’ or that sort of thing.”

“From the book fair I got to know a lot of people, especially Karen Skubish. Karen was in charge of all the book runners. She helped us immensely—we had, you know, we had no bookends. We stole bookends from the library and used them for the weekend, and then put them all back. She invited me to join. I knew other people who were in, Paul Gehl and other people.”

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Photograph by John Dunlevy.

# Footnotes to Famous Caxtonians

Dan Crawford

Nelson Morris, one of Chicago's Big Three in the meatpacking industry, died in 1907, just a year after his son, Ira Nelson Morris\*, joined the Caxton Club. It's tempting to see cause and effect here somewhere. The idea of paying to belong to an organization where members were known for handing over huge sums of money for books—and used books at that—might well have sent the meatpacking giant over the edge.

The cultural and artistic lure of expensive old books would have been largely a mystery to the elder Morris. A crusty old self-made millionaire, Nelson fought to keep his sons from wasting time and money on frivolities, and was able to prevent almost all his children from going to college. College was entirely superfluous when all a young man really needed by way of education could be picked up in the yards, at the plant, or behind a desk.

Ira left an autobiography, written in 1936 but not published until 1947, to detail what he had accomplished in life. *Legacy from My Father* tells about growing up in the Chicago of the late 19th century, the rise and fall of Chicago's meatpacking industry, and a long spell as U.S. Envoy to Sweden. (He served at the same time as an unofficial conduit for communications between the U.S. Government and the then-unrecognized Lenin government in Russia.) He collected books and antiques, and wrote a number of works on Sweden and politics. At his death, he'd acquired decorations from the grateful governments of seven nations, and an antique collection that Sotheby's was glad to dispose of for his heirs.

The theme that runs through the autobiography, however, is how Ira, thirty years after the death of his father, was still trying to justify himself to Nelson Morris. His father, one gathers, would have appreciated none of his son's accomplishments, especially after the packing company sold out to the long-hated rival, Swift. If his sons had kept their minds on business instead of chasing pleasures and comforts....

Ira and his father were two entirely different men, which Ira tried to point out



Ira Nelson Morris '06

from time to time. One of them, he would explain, had come to this country without two coins in his pocket and had scratched and clawed to build a business in the grittiest part of the growing city. The other was born here, the son of a multimillionaire. So how could the older man, he demanded, expect the younger to want to wear the same shoes for seventeen years, simply because his father had had to? Ira DIDN'T have to, and didn't intend to, which infuriated his father.

One episode in the book, more than any other, details the problem faced by both men. Young Ira, despite his father's doubts about higher education, was sent off to Phillips to finish his schooling. One year, when school closed for Christmas, Ira and a friend headed back from Andover, Massachusetts by train. Ira's friend may have had the same sort of parent trouble: in any case, the boys decided to try to please their difficult progenitors for a change. They booked the cheapest round-trip fare they could find.

Only once they'd boarded the train did they read their itineraries. One reason the trip was so cheap was that the train took the long way around, with a long swerve through Canada. This was more of an adventure than a problem until the weather closed in. The heavy snows were early that year, and the train was stuck north of the

border for three days. Ira reached Chicago just 24 hours before he had to get back on the train for the return trip east.

Nelson Morris was absolutely thrilled. Here, finally, was some evidence that one of his sons was prepared to go to personal trouble to save money, that in view of the value of a dollar, Ira would put himself to inconvenience. It was by far the nicest present Nelson had received in a long time, and this sign of thrift in his son so gladdened the old man's heart that he gave Ira a special present in return.

The very nature of the gift points up young Ira's problem. Oh, yes, one can sympathize with Nelson Morris, who feared that he had fought hard to make a fortune for sons who were planning to squander it. One really even has to agree about the importance of teaching children not to take money for granted, of encouraging thrift in the young. But one can see Ira's side of it, too.

After all, why SHOULD you have to ride third class on a cheap round-trip fare when your father can afford to hand you \$1,000 in shares in the Union Pacific Railroad?

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*\*A footnote to a footnote is rather silly, but it should be noted that Ira Nelson Morris belongs to an elite club within the Club, being one of those members associated, however remotely, to America's most celebrated calamities. Current members are asked not to try to get into this group. The Caxton Club can boast a connection with the assassinations of Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, and William McKinley (he was a bystander at all three, and refused ever to meet another President of the United States), the sinking of the Eastland (a member was chairman of the Memorial Board), the sinking of the Titanic (a member's wife was rescued from the liner), and the sinking of the Lusitania (a Caxtonian actually went down with the ship.) Ira's nephew, Captain Nelson Morris, was on board the Hindenburg when it exploded at Lakehurst, New Jersey. He walked out of the wreckage, as a matter of fact, dragging a friend who had been trapped behind a falling structure of white-hot metal. Nelson pulled the metal to one side and hauled his friend free. One wonders what the elder Nelson Morris would have made of this, since his namesake was returning from France at the time, having just married his second Parisian dancer.*



# Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by John Blew

Books and prints related to ancient Egypt from the Mary W. Runnells Rare Book Room on display in the Reading Room of the Field Museum Library, 3rd floor, Field Museum, 1400 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago (to gain access to the Reading Room, see a security guard at any entrance to the Museum) 312-665-7887 (closes 31 August 2006)

"A Movable Feast" (an exhibition of movable books—popups and books of that genre—drawn from a number of important public and private collections spotlighting many of the "heroes" in the field, in conjunction

with the biennial meeting in Chicago of the Movable Book Society) at the Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, 1104 South Wabash, 2nd floor, Chicago 312-344-6684 (from 8 August through 23 September 2006)

"Autumn Bright, Winter's Delight" (an exhibition of books and images from the Library's collection about woodland plants found at the Arboretum) at the Sterling Morton Library, The Morton Arboretum, 4100 Illinois Route 53, Lisle, IL 630-968-0074 (from 21 August 2006 through 31 January 2007)

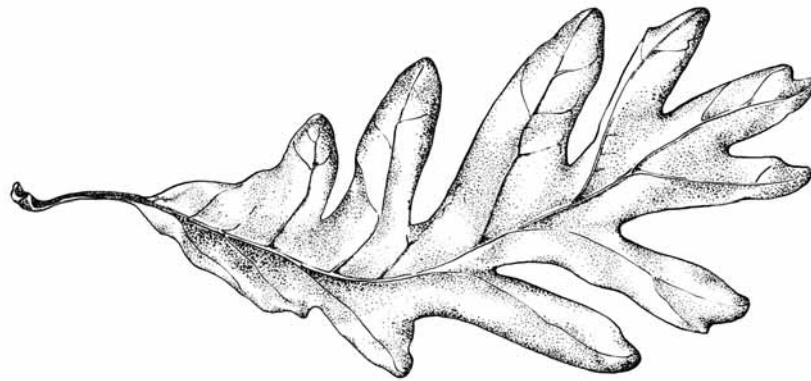
"Scotiana, mostly from the collection donated by R. Douglas Stuart and in honor of Robert D. Stuart, Jr.'s 90th birthday" at the James R. Getz Archives and Special Collections of the

Donnelley and Lee Library, Lake Forest College, 555 North Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 847-735-5064 (closes 31 August 2006)

"The donor recognition exhibit—significant items purchased using endowed funds over the last two years" at the Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections (enter through Main Library), Northwestern University, Evanston 847-491-3635 (closes 8 September 2006)

"Following the Twins Through History" (star charts, astronomical artifacts and related materials from antiquity to the current period which depict the constellation Gemini: the Twins; this constellation imbeds the bright stars Castor and Pollux in the images of twin boys) at the Adler Planetarium & Astronomy Museum, 1300 South Lake Shore Drive (the Museum Campus), Chicago 312-322-0300 (closes 20 August 2006)

"Enrico Fermi, The Life of a Scientist" (images and documents including his



*Autumn Bright, Winter's Delight at Sterling Morton Library*  
QUERCUS ALBA

Chicago years) at the John Crerar Library, University of Chicago, 5730 South Ellis Avenue, Chicago 773-702-8717 (closes 8 September 2006)

"Chicago Sports: Creating An American Team" (traces the history of amateur sports in Chicago) at the Harold Washington Library Center (Chicago Public Library), Special Collections Exhibit Hall, 9th Floor, 400 South State Street, Chicago 312-747-4300 (through Fall 2006)

*Members who have information about current or forthcoming exhibitions that might be of interest to Caxtonians, please call or e-mail John Blew (312-807-4317, e-mail: jblew@bellboyd.com).*

## Club Notes

### Membership Report, June 2006

1) **New members:** We are pleased to welcome the following new members:

**Tom Fitzpatrick** has been a collector since he was an undergraduate at Yale. His collecting interest centers on American law during the colonial period and after the American Revolution. His membership was proposed by John Allen and seconded by Skip Landt.

**Sheri Jones** has served on the Board of

the Newberry Library Associates and is currently active with the Newberry Library Book Fair. Her membership was proposed by Tom Swanstrom, seconded by Bob Brooks.

**Sally Sexton Kalmbach**, an officer in the Chicago Chapter of The Society of Architectural Historians with a special interest in Chicago history, post-Chicago fire to the turn of the century. She is currently working on "Mrs. Potter Palmer's Chicago." Her membership was proposed by Robert Herbst and seconded by Bill Locke.

**Richard Kotz**, an inveterate collector in the fields of literature, history, geography, psychology and religion, and active in

health care advocacy. His membership was proposed by Tom Swanstrom and seconded by John Notz.

2) **Fiscal year results to date:** These additions bring the total to twenty-six new members elected during the past year, July 2005 through June 2006.

3) **Thanks!** We appreciate the support of the many members who during the past year have introduced the Caxton Club to others. Thanks to them, 2005-2006 has been an excellent year for expanding the circle of friendship and good conversation!

—Skip Landt, Bill Mulliken

# Caxtonians Collect: Morrell Shoemaker

Twenty-first in a series of interviews with members.

Interviewed by John Dunlevy

“I’m really not a collector,” insists Morrell M. Shoemaker, “in that I don’t zoom in on a subject and then try and get everything I can on it.” He has been a member of the Caxton Club since 1994, and—for a non-collector—does have quite a—yes—collection of books and related materials, pretty well zoomed in on history of the development of cities.

Most of his books are currently “in process”—in boxes or otherwise inaccessible as he rearranges his house, but he did show me a number of most interesting books, including a number on Paris: Galignani’s 19th century illustrated *Paris Guide*; the handsome folio volumes of J. Vacquier’s *Les Vieux Hotels de Paris* series, featuring architectural and interior design prints and photographs of old buildings from about 1912 to 1920—published, Shoemaker notes with interest, “right through the First World War.”

“When I first started buying these kinds of books, they were very cheap, because they were mainly just out of date. Then—especially in Chicago with the Architecture Foundation and all their docents—everybody had to know all the history of everything, and books that were \$2.50 are now \$225.00.”

Shoemaker also showed me some interesting maps and city views, such as the 16th century bird’s-eye view of Antverpia (Antwerp) by Braun and Hogenberg (originally sold separately to be bound by the buyer into his own atlas). Especially interesting were Wenceslaus Hollar’s multi-sheet views of London made before the fire—with some of the etchings scratched to reflect the aftermath and new building.

Shoemaker’s focus on cities, their histories, and development has its origins in his interest in architecture, his chosen field of study and career, but this might not have been explored in books had it not been—at

least in part—for early and continued relationships with libraries.

When he was 10 years old, his family moved to Martin’s Ferry, Ohio, just across the River from Wheeling, West Virginia. “We were there a couple of years when the



Depression came; it was a steel mill town—a very old town, but they were badly hurt by the Depression. When the mills all shut down there were so many people hanging around on street corners, out of work. The city had no public library, and we all used the library in Wheeling, West Virginia—to which you had to have a membership.” Library membership was not free—at least not for people coming from Ohio.

In Martin’s Ferry it was decided to open a library. “And they got all the schoolchildren they could to go out and solicit books from everybody in town—which amounted to old encyclopedias and things like that. They made a reading room. It was successful in a way. It was very good, because it got a lot of people a place that they’d go during the day,

and they served coffee, and you could read newspapers. A lot of them were first generation people coming over from Hungary and southern Italy and such. And it also got the community interested in these people in an essential way, and they taught them English.”

“Eventually they discovered that the state of Ohio would help fund a public library, and it became, officially, a public library. I always had a very close feeling to it, because I helped start it by bringing my little wagon full of books. So I spent a great deal of time in the library reading everything new that came in.”

Time spent in the library was good preparation for college—and not just in the ways one would usually expect. “When I went to Cornell, I was 17, and the War broke out. One of the first persons drafted to the army was the librarian of Cornell. So the freshman class was used as librarians. We’d each have an evening that we’d have to staff.”

At Cornell, Shoemaker studied architecture. During World War Two, he says, “There was no building going on, and to even want to be an architect was a bit daffy.” At that point, he

figured he would be most likely to end up working in New York City, so the first city that he “really got interested in was New York. I started going on weekends—catch the bus, ride the Greyhound overnight and Saturday morning you’d be in New York. So I started a little collection on New York history. I bought a few in Ithaca. I bought a few cheap books—travelers’ guides, turn-of-the-century, things like that.”

As it turned out, Shoemaker ended up in Chicago as an architect at Jensen and McClurg (the successor firm to Jenny, Mundie and Jensen). “It got me very interested in all these great Chicago buildings.” It also meant convenient book shopping. “Our office was at 39 S. LaSalle. Right

See MORRELL SHOEMAKER, page 4

CAXTONIAN

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# Your Archives in Progress

Paul F. Gehl ('86), *Caxton Club Archivist*

Almost ten years ago Frank Piehl ('85) undertook the gargantuan labor of organizing the archives of the Caxton Club. When it was done he vowed that next time the chore would have to fall to someone else. Fair enough, I said. Now, thankfully, Adrian Alexander ('02) is working to bring the club's archives up to date—no small task given the propensity of the club's officers to create paperwork. A year into it, he has re-formatted the old inventory, added to existing series of documents, and filled some twenty three new boxes with well-ordered files. Now he is ready to ask your help in completing the task. A list of his desiderata can be found at the end of this article.

Only a few of today's Caxtonians remember that the archives of the club were donated to the Newberry Library shortly after the club's centennial. Then-archivist Brother Michael Grace S.J. ('81) handed over one ceremonial box to Newberry president Charles Cullen ('87) at the December 1996 dinner meeting. It looked like a neatly done deal, but in fact the archives were a fair mess at the time. They had been stored in the library's basement for years, but they had never been more than partly organized. Brother Michael, historian Frank Piehl ('85), and I (representing the Newberry) drew up a plan for the collection, and after several years of hard work, the archive was

made fully available with a folder-level inventory for files and detailed, copy-specific catalog records for club publications. All the initial work was undertaken by Frank, who laboriously collated archival copies of Caxton publications, prepared notes for the catalogers, foldered fifty-two boxes of files in fourteen series, and created the inventory. The fruits of his tremendous labor can easily be seen in the Newberry's on-line catalog, where an author search on "Caxton Club" reveals 122 entries.

The club archives now form part of the Newberry's John M. Wing Foundation, its broadly-conceived collection on the history of the book. After Brother Michael's death in 2002, I accepted the office of archivist. (Under the revised by-laws just adopted, as under the old ones, the archivist serves at the appointment of the president of the club.) Adrian Alexander has worked with me for years as a volunteer, sorting archival materials of many kinds. Last year he gamely agreed to take up where Frank had left off, working on the post-1995 files. The biggest difference between the pre- and post-centennial archives was occasioned by the 1994 start-up of the *Caxtonian*. Founder Bob Cotner's ('90) thorough files now consist of six boxes, complete through the date when he handed over the editorship to Robert McCamant ('95) in September 2004. Adrian also created new series for the reconstituted publications committee (two boxes so far) and for the new exhibitions committee (four boxes), both of them

reorganized in 1994 with an eye to centennial events and projects. Some officers have been depositing files for years; others have responded to Adrian's solicitations. The results have kept Adrian busy, but they are a little uneven. One former president sent three big whisky crates full of files; another handed over just the one sheet of paper he considered significant.

Now, Adrian and I appeal for your help. We invite you to donate originals or copies of documents in your own files that concern the club and its activities. For example, we welcome correspondence relating to the club, its activities, or your involvement with it. If you have given a talk to the luncheon or dinner meetings over the years, please share your speaking text or a copy of the notes you used. Above all, if you have photographs, we want copies. We want to have a likeness of every member in the files, so send us the portrait or snapshot that you want to be remembered by. If you have pictures you took of club events—field trips in particular—now is the time to find them and get them to us. Obviously, if you can put dates and names to documents or photographs, that will help; but Adrian has proved to be a good detective, so your bad memory is no excuse.

All materials intended for the archives should be sent or dropped off, clearly marked with "Caxton Archives" and my name —Paul Gehl, The Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St., Chicago, IL 60610-3305. Many thanks!

## Bookmarks...

### Next Year's Dinner Program forecast:

Wednesday, **SEPTEMBER 20**, 2006: Alistair Black, University of Leeds, England. Wednesday, **OCTOBER 18**, 2006: Gordon Turnbull, General Editor, Yale University, The Private Papers of James Boswell. Wednesday, **NOVEMBER 15**, 2006: Joseph Parisi, former editor, *Poetry Magazine*. Wednesday **DECEMBER 20**, 2006: Revels. Wednesday, **JANUARY 17**, 2007: John Crichton, Brick Row Book Shop, San Francisco. Wednesday, **FEBRUARY 21**, 2007: Geoffrey

Smith, Curator of Rare Books, The Ohio State University Library. Wednesday, **MARCH 21**, 2007: Gary Johnson, President, The Chicago History Museum. Wednesday, **APRIL 18**, 2007: Stuart Sherman, Professor, Fordham University. Wednesday **MAY 16**, 2007: Robert Jackson, Collector, FABS co-founder, Cleveland Ohio. Wednesday, **JUNE 20**, 2007: to be announced.