



Aldus Society Notes

Autumn 2006

Volume 7, No. 1

Jack Matthews to Speak About ... ?

Thursday, October 12th — Jack Matthews, noted Ohio collector and author, will be returning to the Aldus Society to share more book-related stories. Jack was one of our speakers in 2001, and all are looking forward to his return.

On this visit Jack will, in his own words, “be introducing the writings of a man whose works have been judged, dismissed and neglected largely because he was found guilty of the greatest and least forgivable literary sin according to those tense mediocrities who have for the past century or so presided over such reputations: he was a relentless happy man and radiated his enthusiastic endorsement of life in virtually every sentence.”

But, Jack being Jack, he adds, “Please note: the above is what I am seriously thinking of at the moment, but I have been known to change my mind and would like to reserve the right to shift into something quite different.”



Aldus Calendar

October

12 (Regular Meeting) — Jack Matthews, noted Ohio collector and author, on book collecting.

14 (First Saturday) — The next event will occur on the second Saturday of October – a delay made necessary by a home game of the Ohio State University Buckeye football team. Geoff Smith will be displaying and discussing the books acquired by OSU at the 2006 New York Antiquarian Book Fair, which includes a range of works from Galileo to Jane Austen.

For the next three years, First Saturday events will be held at the OSU Rare Book and Manuscripts Library's temporary location at 2700 Kenny Road. The event will begin at 10:00 AM. For directions, go to <http://library.osu.edu/sites/rarebooks/location.php>

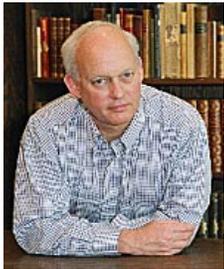
November

9 (Regular Meeting) — John Crichton, proprietor of San Francisco's Brick Row Book Shop and Past President of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America speaking on the antiquarian book trade when he poses the question, “Whither the Antiquarian Bookseller in the 21st Century?”

December

4 (Holiday Dinner) — Our annual holiday get-together, to be held at *La Scala*. (Final details will be announced later). Although plans are preliminary, we are hoping to have our first (annual?) silent book auction, where works donated to the Aldus Society by members and others will be for sale. Proceeds will benefit Aldus Society programming. More on this as it develops.

John Crichton in November



Thursday, November 9th — John Crichton, proprietor of San Francisco's Brick Row Book Shop and Past President of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America will be stopping in Columbus on his way to the Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair and sharing his thoughts about the future of the antiquarian book trade in the 21st century. John is an exceptional bookseller and a strong supporter of FABS. It will be a pleasure to

have him visit the Aldus Society.

You can find out about the Brick Row Book Shop at: www.brickrow.com.



Aldus Society Meetings

Regular meetings of the Aldus Society are held at 7:30 PM on the second Thursday of the month at

**The Thurber Center
91 Jefferson Avenue
Columbus, Ohio**

☞ Socializing Begins One-Half Hour Before ☞



Visit the Aldus Society web site for up-to-date information about our programs and activities, in-depth articles about many of our speakers, and links to other book related organizations.

www.AldusSociety.com

The Aldus Society

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Why I'm a Member of the Aldus Society

Ron Ravneberg

Why am I a member of the Aldus Society? Where else can you find programs and activities like this in Columbus? (My apologies in advance for any omissions.)

- 2000** Collecting Victorian Literature (*Robert Jackson*)
History of the Logan Elm Press (*Bob Tauber*)
Collecting Mark Twain (*Robert Slotta*)
Book Design & Printing (*Graham Moss*)
Tales of the Book Trade (*Bruce McKittrick*)
- 2001** Finding the Right Conservation Solution for Important Library Collections (*Wes Boomgard*)
The Art of Calligraphy: A History of Script (Part I) (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
Prophetic Whims: Observations on the Future of Book Collecting (*Jack Matthews*)
Between Papyrus and Paper: Vellum Manuscript Treasures of the Pierpont Morgan Library (*William Voelkle*)
The First Books Published in Columbus (*Charles Cole*)
The Art of Dard Hunter: American Craftsman, Artist, Type Designer, Papermaker & Printer (*Dard Hunter III*)
The History of Text & Image: The Classical Age: Latin Epigraphy (*Charles Babcock*)
Field Trip: Dard Hunter's Mountain House (Chillicothe, Ohio)
Selecting Books for Book Reviews (*Bill Eichenberger*)
- 2002** Searching for Captain Cook: My Serendipitous Journey (*Ronald Ravneberg*)
The Art of Calligraphy: A History of Script (Part II) (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
More Than Recipes: A Literary Look at Cookbooks (*Peter Franklin*)
Field Trip: Toledo Museum of Art (Toledo, Ohio)
The History of Text & Image: Medieval Latin Manuscripts (*Frank Coulson*)
Collecting James Thurber (*Jay Hoster*)
An American Avant Garde: Second Wave (*Marvin Sackner*)
Building a Special Collection (*Owen Kubik*)
Calligraphy Workshop (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
The History of Text & Image: Medieval Slavic Manuscripts (*Predrag Matejic*)
Field Trip: Rowfant Club & Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland, Ohio)
The Publishing World and the Future of Books (*Susanne Jaffe*)
- 2003** Conservation of Books and Paper (*Harry Campbell*)
Repair and Conservation of Sacred Documents (*Rabbi William Goldberg*)
The Art of the Picturebook (*Sylvia & Kenneth Marantz*)
The History of Text & Image: The St. Gall School and Scriptorium in the Early Middle Ages (*Anna Grotans*)
Collecting Landmark Books of Western Civilization (*Stuart Rose*)
Workshop: Calligraphy (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
Overlooked Authors Deserving Recognition, born in Columbus, Ohio, in the Nineteenth Century (*Charles Cole*)
The History of Text & Image: Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Tradition (*Drew Jones*)
Encounter with Switzerland: Adventures in Book Collecting (*Donald Tritt*)
- 2004** Comics 100: The History of American Comic Strips (*Lucy Caswell*)
First American Editions of Nineteenth Century British Authors (*Bill Rich*)
Aldus Membership "Show and Tell" (*Various Members*)
The History of Text & Image: Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts and Their History (*Daniel Frank*)
Other People's Books: Association Copies and Literary Detective Work (*Paul Ruxin*)
Books That Influenced My Life (*Robert Jackson*)
Collecting James Thurber (*Jay Hoster*)
Conservation of Books and Paper (*Harry Campbell*)
Collecting Mark Twain (*Robert Slotta*)
Why This Book: What Makes Some Books Collectible? (*Geoff Smith & Ronald Ravneberg*)
The Future of the Book (*Nicholas Basbanes, Barry Moser, Robert Jackson, & Joseph Branin*)
The Ohio State University Library Renovation (*Joseph Branin*)
A Splendor of Letters: The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World (*Nicholas Basbanes*)
Tanakh and Testament: A Reprobate Tinkers with Holy Writ (*Barry Moser*)
Workshop: Paper Making (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
The Hawkesworth Copy: A Bibliographic Investigation of James Cook, John Hawkesworth and the Strahan Quarto Editions of 1773 (*Ronald Ravneberg*)
Kenny's Bookshop: Anecdotes & Recollections (*Desmond Kenny*)
- 2005** Aldus Membership "Show and Tell" (*Various Members*)
The Anti-Slavery Collection of Oberlin College Library: A Monument to "The Town that Started the Civil War" (*Ed Vermue*)
Thoughts on the Bookseller's Trade (*Member Booksellers' Panel*)
The Sting of the Wasp: (*Richard Samuel West*)
Field Trip: "The Art of the Book" at the Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, Ohio)
The Future of Books (*Paul Watkins*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Early Works on Astronomy
Collecting Illuminated Manuscripts (*John Lawrence*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Caxton & Other Incunabula
First Saturday (Hands-On): 1605 Don Quixote & Other Cervantes Works
First Saturday (Hands-On): The 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle
First Saturday (Hands-On): Shakespeare Folios, Quartos & Other
Art Nouveau Book Illustration in England and France (*Paul Christenson*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): 1855 Leaves of Grass & Other Whitman
The History of Text & Image: Foxe's Book of Martyrs: The History of a Book and the History of the Book (*John King*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): The Peter D. Franklin Cookbook Collection
Field Trip: McKell Library & Dard Hunter's Mountain House (Chillicothe, Ohio)
The Life and Collections of J. K. Lilly (*Joel Silver*)
- 2006** First Saturday (Hands-On): Benjamin Franklin: Autobiography and Works From His Press
This Old Book (*Harry Campbell*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): African-American Holdings
The Revival of the Logan Elm Press (*Bob Tauber*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Irish Books & Manuscripts
The History of Text & Image: *The Arabic Manuscript Tradition* (*Michael Zwettler*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Unpublished Drawings of James Thurber
Researching "The Book Nobody Read," Copernicus' De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium (*Owen Gingerich*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): 18th Century Literature Holdings
Circus Collectibles (*Fred Pfening*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Early Holdings in Science & Technology
Field Trip: The Lilly Library (Bloomington, Indiana)
Workshop: Paper Marbling (*Ann Alaia Woods*)
Benjamin Franklin, Printer (*Kay Kramer*)
Further Thoughts on Books, Authors and Collecting (*Jack Matthews*)
First Saturday (Hands-On): Acquisitions from the 2006 New York Antiquarian Book Fair
Whither the Antiquarian Bookseller in the 21st Century? (*John Chrichton*)

Programs for 2007 are still "under construction," but the pattern will no doubt continue. That's why I'm a member of the Aldus Society.



A “Bookstore-y”

George Cowmeadow Bauman
Co-owner, The Acorn Bookshop

Young Entrepreneurs

When we open our bookstore doors to the public at 11 each morning, the world is invited in; all kinds of folks respond, and most are welcome. We see book buyers and store browsers, information seekers and occasional school booklist shoppers, and a few strange people as well.

And, naturally, we get many coming in to sell their “treasures”. When people haul books in to sell, we think of their containers as “wonder boxes”, as one perceptive customer called them. You wonder what’s going to be offered to us, always hoping that the boxes are full of wonders.

In order to accomplish bookstore tasks such as researching, cleaning, pricing, shelving, and restocking books, we officially restrict our buying days to Wednesdays and Fridays. We WILL buy on other days if I’m not busy in the office or out looking at a private library, or even on Saturdays if Christine and I aren’t busy with sales. But we discourage sellers from backing trunk-filled Buicks up to the side door the other days of the week. We’d get little done otherwise, other than making parking lot book deals. Of course if those trunk treasures were really treasures, we’d happily look at them ANYtime, but experience has taught us that about 90% of the books offered to us should really be donated to a Friends of the Library sale, Goodwill, or the dumpster – though we seldom would suggest the latter.

On those official buying days, Christine and I are usually quite busy, acquiring books for Norman to process and get ready for their new home with us, and eventually with one of our customers.

But a recent Friday was Christine’s birthday, and to celebrate she was motoring across broad northern Pennsylvania to friends in Scranton, and on to the Garden State. With Birthday Girl rolling along in Plaidcar through my home state, I knew it would be a big-band-energy kind of day for me, alone on the Acorn sales floor.

Mid-afternoon fulfilled those expectations, as I was buying and selling and trading, frequently simultaneously...and lovin’ every minute of it.

Several regulars and a few first-timers had been by to buy, or just visit, such as our British-born architect who loves The French Loaf next door, and so visits the B&B (bookshop &



bakery) corner each Friday. He occasionally parks his new hot red Accord – with the “BLIMEY” license plate – across two spaces to avoid door-dings. He’s so regular in his search for books on maritime art and good fiction that if he pops in on any day BUT Friday, we’re momentarily confused.

He was browsing in historical fiction about 3:30 that Friday when Christine was gone, while another regular (and high-end buyer) was at the counter golf-talking as I was assessing the value of a shopping bag full of paperbacks a woman had just brought in. There was one young couple – “just browsing, thanks” – in literature, a “just looking around” military-looking guy in Science Fiction, and a bearded, regular cook-book buyer was at the browser’s table, drooling over recently arrived recipes. Tony Bennett was singing to all of us on his 80th birthday.

Booktopia was disrupted when our belled glass front door suddenly jangled open, and in pushed two teenagers – a tall, punk-looking blond waving books in one fist, followed by a short, scowling ballcap-wearer wearing an obviously heavy backpack. What with his stature, and hunched over appearance, he looked like a troll serving the Blond Giant.

I good-afternoon’d them and initially thought they might be the young “We’ve-got-a-few-promotions” guys who go door-to-door along the businesses on Fifth, selling knock-off perfume and cheap watches. We say no to them before they can finish their spiel. But THOSE aggressive hustlers are clean and wearing ties – even if they are clip-ons. These two had no dress code save that of ditch-diggers at work on a rainy day.

However, they were here with the same intent as the sartorial cons – hustling items of dubious value, which, come to think of it, is not all that much different from politicians wanting our votes.

Ignoring my obvious involvement with the two at the counter – as well as public decorum, Blondie arrogantly shouted across the CD table, “Ya buy books?”

We all cringed at the volume and attitude. These guys were not one of us in the store, leisurely booking away a Friday afternoon.

He rudely nudged the golfer aside and slapped down three dirty, trade paperbacks whose covers were creased nearly back to their spine.

Calmly I replied that we did buy books, and that I was currently doing so with someone ahead of him, “But we buy only books in very good condition”. I was trying to communicate to him that he had to be patient and wait in line and that even if he did that, we wouldn’t be buying any of their books because of their unsaleable condition.

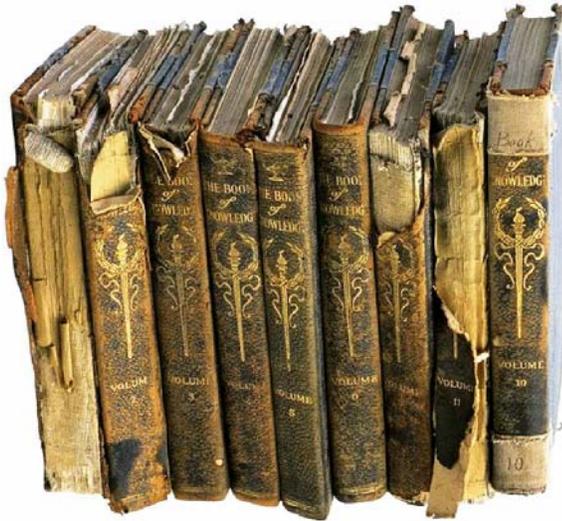
“What?!” he demanded, as unhappy with my attitude as I was with his, and looking like I’d just insulted his mother or parole officer.

Tony Bennett was singing “I Wanna Be Around (To Pick up the Pieces)”.

“Your books have no commercial value because of their condition,” I said reasonably, still trying to sort through the proffered paperbacks of the patient woman who must have been wishing she’d brought books in another time. “We buy books that look like this,” I continued, holding up a couple of her paperbacks as examples of preferred condition.

“Huh?!”

The short guy behind him had caught on; he yelled at me over his buddy and my conversationalist, who had backed away from close proximity to the teenagers as a sea-wader would from incoming wave-borne scum.



“Do you buy encyclopedias?” he shouted, and with hands so dirty they could have doubled as a mushroom-growing culture he pulled a couple of volumes of a Funk & Wagnall’s set out of the bulging backpack.

“No, we don’t,” I replied, deflating their fantasy of books for bucks, their chance to buy a cool new black Mustang convertible, though these guys couldn’t be cool if they were kept in Rife’s meat freezer for a week.

Where they got the books is anyone’s guess; in all probability scrounged from where the volumes had been previously abandoned. These boys sure weren’t selling off their own personal library.

Though he had moved away from contamination distance, Tiger-wannabe was still trying to talk about breaking 100 on the golf course the day before. Finally the two scruffy intruders caught on that there were other people present, and my bookies weren’t their kind.

The tall blonde glared at me for a moment more, but broke his gaze when the servile backpacker complained loudly to Blondie’s back, “I’m not carrying all these books around all day.” They returned to the door, very unhappy campers, and left.

All the Acorners breathed a sigh of relief, and returned to their books and browsing. Tony sang “Stranger in Paradise”.

Around 4pm, Jack finished listing our Internet books for the

day (He’s up to 6,400 after nine months) and came blinking out of the dark office (“I like working in a cave-like atmosphere.”) to say farewell for the day.

A moment later he stuck his head back in the side door and said, “Wanna see something?”

I joined him on the sidewalk at the side of the store, and there at the front corner of the building was an overloaded backpack, with books -- Funk and Wagnall’s volumes -- spilling out of the top and scattered messily around. Those punks had carried the rejected books out the front of the store and had abandoned them immediately. Dropped them and boogied. The beast of burden had convinced the front man: no longer would he carry a backbreaking bookload of worthless stuff.

Though knowing they wouldn’t be back, I didn’t want to presume ownership and do something with the books yet. I straightened up the mess and figured I’d wait till closing, three hours away, before dealing further with the books. With any luck, they wouldn’t be there then.

By 8 o’clock I had closed the store, watered the beautiful petunias and grasses out front, emptied the dehumidifier downstairs, and went to cross the street for a veggie sub.

There was a beautiful sunset straight down Fifth Avenue to the right, so drivers coming from the Grandview Avenue direction would be seriously squinting and holding up their hands to block the intense sun from their eyes. I knew to be careful crossing over to avoid a different kind of crossing over.

I was curious about the backpack of books. Would it be gone? Picked up by our punks or stolen by a fresh set of youthful entrepreneurs? Or would the book pile still be there?

It was, but at that very moment it seemed to be on the move.

Another enterprising kid was down on the sidewalk, scooping the books into the black backpack, with his bicycle leaning up against the bookstore for a quick getaway.

He saw me walking over to him. Looking up, he nervously stuttered, “I was, uh, just moving them, uh, out of the way.”

Very quick thinker, and a very poor liar.

Yet the thought of a fast buck somehow to be made caused him to ask – albeit timidly, “Are these yours?”

“Nope,” I replied, realizing that I’d just been presented with a great opportunity, a Lady Luck smile: I’d kill two birds with one stone – getting rid of the books and not having to do it myself. There’s a little Tom Sawyer in all of us.

“They’re yours for the taking,” I said, magnanimously sweeping my arm toward them.

He wasn’t sure what was going on, but he was greedy and here was this guy saying he could have them, yet he was an

adult and you can never be sure what they're meaning, even when you hear what they're saying.

Greed won out. He returned to his small theft.

He was around 12, and stocky, so I'm sure he thought he'd have no problem hefting the load and heading down the avenue.

But he hadn't counted on the serious weight of books.

I watched from the Giant Eagle parking lot across the street as he struggled to get the pack on his back. He tried several ways to lift it to his back, his frustration increasing as his legs weakened. Finally, he got one arm in a strap, and as he twisted to get the other arm in, he lost his balance and staggered into his bike, and everything crashed down, the F&W's once again scattered on the bookstore's sidewalk.

He kicked the books off his bike spokes, lifted the bike up, and jumped on. With a shrug of his shoulders at me, he pedaled into the sunset. The theft had been too big for him.

On the way back across Fifth with my dinner, I stopped to again straighten the books, hoping that another teenaged businessman would complete Tom Sawyer's fence for me.

I worked late that Friday night while Linda was out with her friends. I was spending the evening with some of my friends: my books and the bookstore.

Just before midnight I locked up to head home, but not before checking for the now-storied book collection.

They were still there. Nuts.

I decided to leave them and hope for an overnight deliverance from the problem of what to do with them.

I turned the van from Fifth onto Broadview, and instantly forgot the books as I approached the first intersection with Sixth, where in January a distracted, uninsured, 18-year-old woman with a car full of her friends had run the stop sign and slammed into me at about the same time of night, totaling her car and doing \$15,000 worth of damage to my van. The incident haunts my driving every day, still generating accident-apprehension seven months later. She damaged more than my car.

While turning onto Tremont Avenue, the backpack situation returned to my head, and the thought occurred to me that an abandoned backpack sitting outside a bookstore COULD mean an overnight donation, which happens from time to time. But in these days of heightened security consciousness it could perhaps signify to a passing patrol car that it might be the work of a terrorist.

I could just imagine the Bomb Squad being called to Acorn, "We have a suspicious-looking backpack here. Bring the dogs, the robot...

and the bookworms!!"

If that happened, I'd probably get a call in the middle of the night from the cops, reporting the backpack crisis outside

the store, as Channel 4 was setting up a mobile unit with lights, ready for hot action.

Should I go back and move it inside to avoid the possibility of a lot of needless police involvement on an always-busy weekend night or just call it a day and go home?

I considered what to do all the way home – eight minutes away, but when the garage doors on Riverhill Drive closed behind the Odyssey, the books were forgotten for the night.

On Saturday morning, I pulled into the parking lot after hitting several garage sales, and immediately checked for the left behind goods.

The backpack and books were gone.

Tom Sawyer was smiling.



Book Hunting Notes

Bill Rich

Traditionally, a lot of literature collecting has meant collecting "first editions". Indeed, many a bookseller lists among his specialties "literary first editions", a broader category, perhaps, than even the inclusive categories of "Americana", or "fine printing".

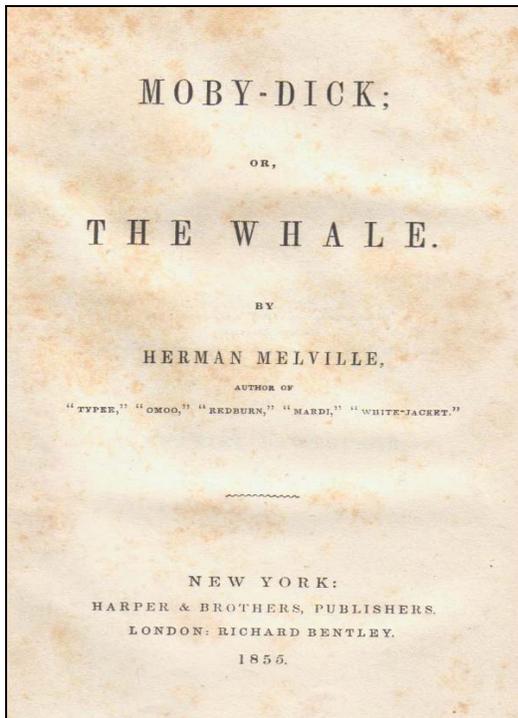


While the technical definition of a first edition is "every copy printed from the same setting of type", this is not how the term is understood in the book collecting world. In this little universe, a first edition comprises, at most, only all copies printed at the time of first publication. For the even finer sub-divisions of "state" and "issue", we must look to the standard books, such as Carter's *ABC for Book Collectors*. But without going into these minutiae, it is fair to say that the first edition of the book collecting world is the first printing. Consider the hapless book hunter, who, while prowling bookshop shelves, spots what he thinks is a first at a ridiculously low price. He does not inquire of the shopkeeper. No, better not call attention to the wonderful bargain. He plunks down the bucks, and scuttles off with the prize. Later, inspecting his first edition "find" more closely at home, he discovers, printed somewhere in the volume, fatal words such as "2nd impression", or, "40th thousand", or, in the case of modern first editions, one of the many other codes by which publishers indicate a later printing. He can't put it on the shelf beside its legitimate brothers, except as a temporary place keeper. Poor guy – he might as well read it.

Ok, I know all of that. But I like, and collect, 19th Century literary firsts. And, for some high spots, this is, for me, akin

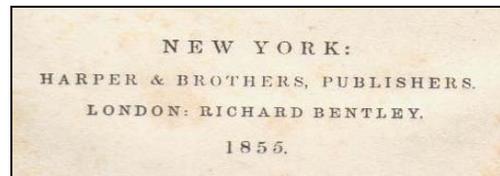
to liking Dom Perignon with only a Budweiser pocketbook. I like, for example, Herman Melville and Charles Dickens, and have done my best over the years to collect their books in reasonable condition firsts. But consider their respective high spots. For Melville, this is, of course, “Moby Dick”, or “The Whale”, as it was called when it was first published in England (preceding the American publication, by the way). Today, a first printing of “Moby Dick” (Harper and Bros., N.Y., 1851) in the original cloth, in decent condition, costs somewhat more than a new Corvette, loaded. And if and when a first of “The Whale” (3 vols. Bentley, London, 1851) appears again for sale, I am rather sure it will fetch into 6 figures. So, what to do?

Well, maybe a later printing isn't so bad in this case (you can hear the rationalizing going on). “Moby Dick” it turns out, was printed from stereotype plates, even the first printing. Harpers retained the plates, and while Moby Dick was hardly a best seller, there was just enough demand to merit wiping off the plates and reprinting a few copies from time to time. To be specific, there were 2,915 copies of the first Harpers printing, of which almost 300 unsold copies were burnt in a disastrous fire in 1853. Harper then printed 250 more copies in 1855, and two more printings of about the same number of copies were run in 1863 and 1871. These were enough to satisfy demand; no more copies were printed in Melville's lifetime. Late in his life, Harpers was having a general housecleaning, and decided to dispose of the stereotype “Moby Dick” plates, along with many other stored plates for their no-longer-in-demand books. Melville was offered a chance to buy the plates, but lacked the cash (or inclination) to do so, and they were evidently disposed of for scrap metal value. It will be seen that these later printings are actually scarcer than the first.

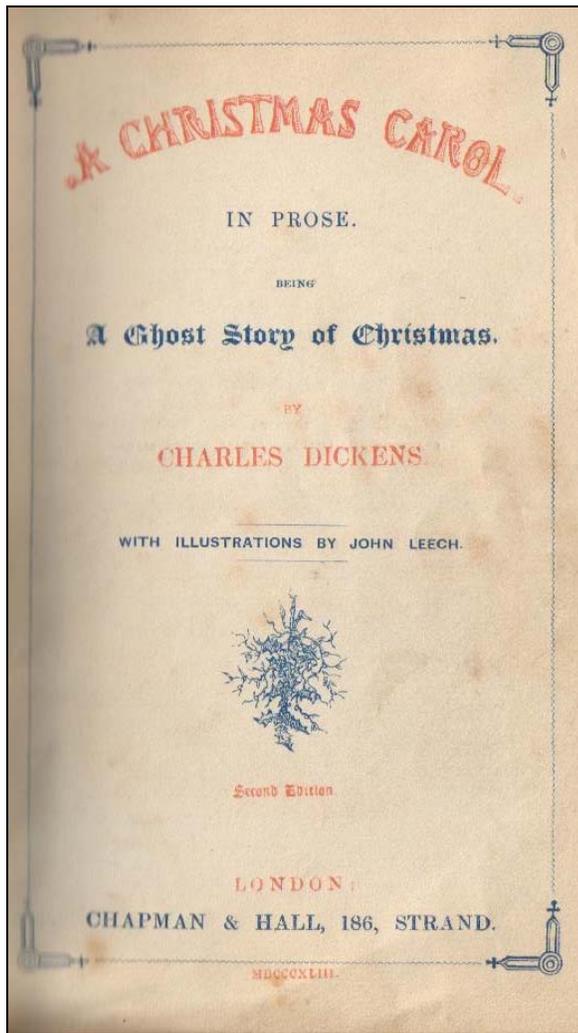


A dozen years ago, a well-known dealer cataloged a copy of the second, 1855 printing of “Moby Dick”. The book was in the original brown cloth, a binding identical to one of the variants used on the first printing. The price was considerably less than a tenth that of the first printing. Seized with the desire to at least touch the hem of the master's garment, I called in my order within an hour of getting the catalog, and secured the book. The title page is shown in the illustration below.

Look carefully at that 1855 date at the foot of the page. The second “5” rides a trifle “proud”, its slightly higher placement on the line betraying that Harpers cut a slug into the plate for this single number, replacing the “1” on the original stereotype plate used for the 1851 printing. Other than this, the text blocks of the two printings are identical; the only other difference in the books is that this second printing does not have the ads that were bound in the back of the first. But, if I had bought the first printing, one of my kids would have been out two or three years' college tuition.



And what of Dickens? Well, here there might be some debate on his ultimate high spot. But to the world at large, this has to be “A Christmas Carol”, hands down. And this is reflected in the price. A first printing, first issue, first state of “Carol” is expensive, although it had a fairly large printing, and is not anywhere near as scarce as several other Dickens books. A London dealer cataloged a first issue in very good original binding at 10,500 last year – pounds, not dollars. Now, I have a fairish Dickens collection, but my abilities have never run to a “Christmas Carol” first. But here, again, a poorer man's substitute is available. Like “Moby Dick”, the printing history is interesting. Unlike “Moby Dick”, “Carol” was a smash hit in the year it was published. Dickens had decided to publish the book himself, and to take over all profits. But he wanted an attractive Christmas gift book, so there are colored plates, gilt edges and stamping, and various expensive touches by the standards of the time. Six thousand copies of the first edition were published in December 19, 1843. Dickens was toying with various changes during publishing, so there are various states of the book. Most copies, including the earliest, have an 1844 date on the title page. Two thousand copies of the “second edition” (actually, the second printing) were almost exhausted by orders from the trade before its publication date of January 6, 1844. The third through seventh printings totaled perhaps 6,000 more copies, and were all printed and sold by May, 1844. Again, these later printings sell for a fraction of the cost of the true first. The illustration below shows my copy of the second printing, with an actual 1843 date, and with few changes from the 1st, but, there is that “Second Edition” at the foot of the title page. The binding and finishing of this copy are quite similar to the first.



These are books that I have had much joy from, although I have heard that collecting second printings lacks the thrill – like “kissing your sister” has been the put-down. So be it – “an ill-favoured thing sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that that no man else will.” But not quite this, really. These particular second printings command increasingly better prices as the firsts become scarce, and with astronomical prices realized when they do appear. And, in these books, I have two of the jazziest openings in English literature: “*Call me Ishmael.*” ... and ... “*Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that.*”



Hidden Information: Beyond the Digital Reach

Paul Duguid

I was working in an archive of a 250-year-old business, reading correspondence from about the time of the American Revolution. Incoming letters were stored in wooden boxes about the size of a standard Styrofoam plastic cooler, each containing a fair portion of dust as old as the letters. As opening a letter triggered a brief asthmatic attack, I wore a scarf tied over my nose and mouth. Despite my bandit’s at-

tire, my nose ran, my eyes wept, and I coughed, wheezed, and snorted. I longed for a digital system that would hold the information from the letters and leave the paper and dust behind.

One afternoon, another historian came to work on a similar box. He read barely a word. Instead, he picked out bundles of letters and, in a move that sent my sinuses into shock, ran each letter beneath his nose and took a deep breath, at times almost inhaling the letter itself but always getting a good dose of dust. Sometimes, after a particularly profound sniff, he would open the letter, glance at it briefly, make a note and move on.

Choking behind my mask, I asked him what he was doing. He was, he told me, a medical historian. (A profession to avoid if you have asthma.) He was documenting outbreaks of cholera. When that disease occurred in a town in the eighteenth century, all letters from that town were disinfected with vinegar to prevent the disease from spreading. By sniffing for the faint traces of vinegar that survived 250 years and noting the date and source of the letters, he was able to chart the progress of cholera outbreaks.

His research threw new light on the letters I was reading. Now cheery letters telling customers and creditors that all was well, business thriving, and the future rosy read a little differently if a whiff of vinegar came off the page. Then the correspondent’s cheeriness might be an act to prevent a collapse of business confidence – unaware that he or she would be betrayed by a scent of vinegar.

Trip Report from Portugal

*From: The Social Life of Information
by John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid.
[Boston]: Harvard Business School Press, 2000.*



History of Text & Image: The Movie (DVD Actually)

The Aldus Society History of Text & Image series is available for viewing on DVD by Aldus Society members. The series includes the following chapters:

1. The Classical Age: Latin Epigraphy (Charles Babcock)
2. Medieval Latin Manuscripts (Frank Coulson)
3. Medieval Slavic Manuscripts (Predrag Matejic)
4. The St. Gall School and Scriptorium in the Early Middle Ages (Anna Grotans)
5. Anglo-Saxon Manuscript Tradition (Drew Jones)
6. Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts and Their History (Daniel Frank)
7. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs: The History of a Book and the History of the Book (John King)
8. From Alexandria, Arabia and China to Baghdad: The Arabic Book to ca. 1000 CE (Michael Zwettler)

Contact Geoff Smith at (614) 292-5938 if you’d like to borrow a set of the presentations.





The Aldus Society

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Book Illustrator Exhibit

The High Road Gallery, a non-profit fine art gallery, located at 12 E. Stafford Avenue in Worthington, will present an art exhibit entitled *“Touching the Heart”*, *Illustrators of Books* from Wednesday, Sept. 27th through October 21st. The show will feature the work of 20 artists who will exhibit original illustrations, prints, posters and of course, their books. Many of the works on display are from published books.



Mark Twain Prints

We still have two of the wonderful photographic prints of Mark Twain that were so generously donated to the Aldus Society by member Robert Slotta of Admirable Books.

The 8x10 black and white matted prints are available for \$35 each, and 100% of the proceeds will be divided between the Aldus Society and the Friends of the Ohio State University Libraries.

If you'd like one of these prints, be sure to ask at a regular Aldus Society meeting, or contact Ron Ravneberg at either (614) 457-1153 or RRavneberg@aol.com.

