

# THE MICROBIBLIOPHILE®

A Bimonthly Journal about Miniature Books and the Book Arts

Vol. XXXII, Number 1

January 2013

PICTURE IMAGE WIP

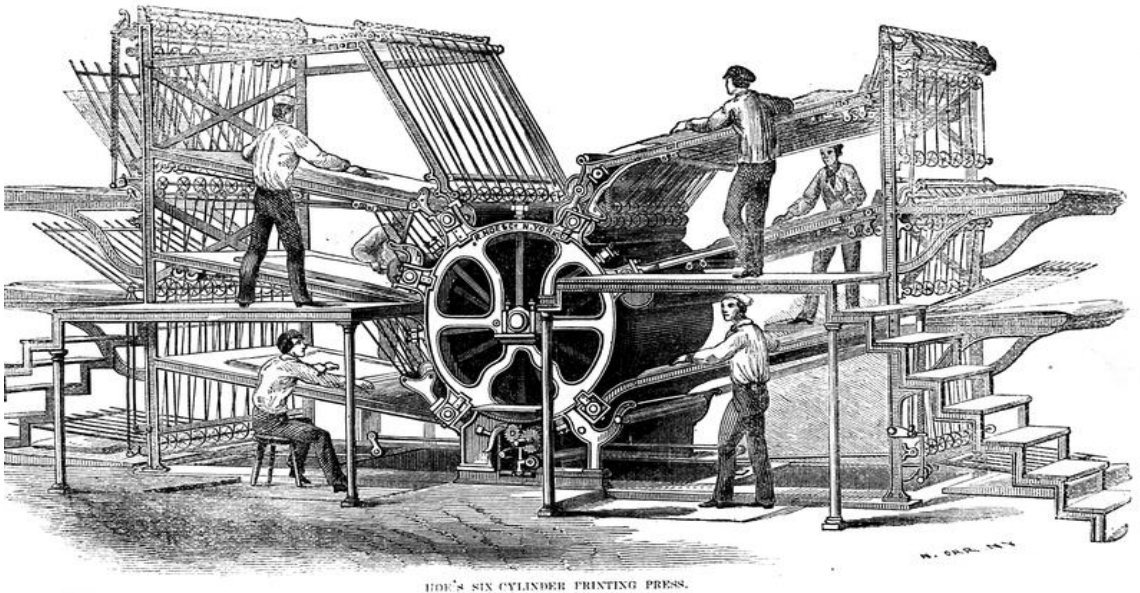
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*1977 - 2013... 36<sup>th</sup> year and going strong*

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## *Technology Jumps Ahead of the Flat-Bed Press, circa 1864*



HOE'S SIX CYLINDER PRINTING PRESS.

*Image from 'Orr's History of the Processes of Manufacturing', 1864*

In the world of miniature book printing we sometimes think of printing machines as a small plate press, which could be operated by a hand lever or a foot treadle. Gutenberg's invention of 'moveable type' forever changed the availability of printed documents and books and the way that people conceived and described the world they lived in. Technology marched forward over the years as well. Demand for more and more printed documents expanded exponentially. The need for machines that could print vast numbers of 'pages', at a previously thought incomprehensible speed, had arrived during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1842, Richard Hoe invented a rotary printing press that placed the 'type' on a revolving cylinder, allowing for a much faster printing process than a 'flat-bed' press could achieve. This particular machine was intended for the production of newspaper pages. The machine was in commercial use by 1847 and improved again in 1870 to allow for printing on both sides of a sheet of paper. The machine was not intended for the fine art of letterpress printing, but just the same, it was part of the evolution of printing technology.

The workers in the illustration must have been very busy throughout their day, loading in blank paper and removing the printed pages. I wonder why the one worker on the 'bottom left' got to sit in a chair?

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*Robert F. Hanson, Founder, 1977*

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## *The Microbibliophile*

P. O. Box 5453, North Branch, NJ 08876 U.S.A.

**Jon H. Mayo**, Publisher

**James M. Brogan**, Editor

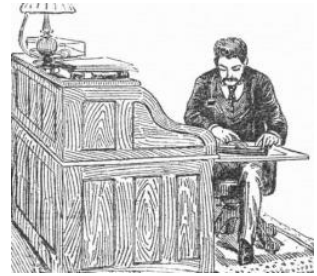
© 2011 by James M. Brogan

## Greetings from the Squeaky Roll Top Desk:

November and December just seemed to fly across the calendar faster than you can blink your eye. Maybe it is because of all the holidays that are part of these months, or maybe it is the ‘changing of the clocks’, who knows? Seems like only yesterday I put the last issue in the mail, and here I am hitting the keyboard again.

I received many wonderful comments about our November/December issue. I hope that the quality and variety of content will continue to please all of our readers. Feedback is the lifeblood of ongoing success so please continue to let me know what you like and would like to read about.

I am as excited about beginning this year’s long journey detailing the various aspects of the life and work of Achille J. St. Onge, as I was when I started 2012 and the Dickens series. Well maybe I am a bit more excited about this year’s topics as the St. Onge books are the catalyst that moved me into the world of miniature book collecting. There is an interesting story about me getting off the elevator, on the wrong floor, in the B. Altman’s Department Store in NYC. There in front of me was a small case with miniature books and a copy of St. Onge’s ‘Abraham Lincoln 1809-1959’, by Carl Sandburg. I will save the additional details about that ‘chance of the day’ until another issue. I think that some of the information that I have been able to gather and print as part of this issue has not been printed before. Certainly not in anything I have been able to read previously. There is a certain amount of gathering and research involved in working back in time to highlight the work of a person like St. Onge. After contacting several readers and collectors, I have been able to locate the home collections of several variants and hopefully we will be able to bring you some pictures along the way since most of the variants are very rare indeed. Bob Massmann and ‘Archie’ enjoyed a long and fruitful friendship. Bob has agreed to give use some of his great insight and information, sometimes a bit of a funny story, and sometimes an explanation about the books and the man. I also want to extend a special ‘Thank you’ to David Nicholson, a subscriber and MBS member who helped me with the St. Onge research for this issue.



The Miniature Book Society is planning its 2013 Conclave in Vancouver, Canada; the dates are August 9-11. If you have never been to Vancouver, now is the time to make your plans and reservations. Vancouver has been voted one of the best cities in the world to live in or visit. Jan Kellet and I are co-hosting the event and we hope to make your Conclave experience the best ever. The specifics can be reviewed on the MBS website as well as a special blog website that is maintained by Jan, ‘dewaldenpress.com’. The most current information within the blog is an insight to Granville Island, one of the many attractions in Vancouver, by Angelika Jaeck. In addition to the Conclave activities, I am planning to take my wife Elaine for a ‘float plane’ ride out of the harbor and across all of the surrounding mountains. Priceless. If you do not have access to the Internet, drop me a line and I will be more than happy to send you some hardcopy.

There are six new miniature book reviews for you this month, including a ‘six-volume set’ of poems by Robert Burns. There is plenty to read including the second installment about medieval bookmaking by Randy Asplund, papermaking by Peter Thomas, strange facts by Michael Garbett, book curses by Margaret Challenger, a special article about John Steinbeck, by our founding editor and much more.

Hope you enjoyed that ‘Smokin Bishop’ with your last issue, it is snowing again here in NJ so hopefully it is time to put another log on the fire, sit back and enjoy *The Microbibliophile*.

If you would like to submit a review of a favorite book, new or old, or an informative article about a topic related to miniature books, please do so. I will be looking for your envelope when I open the little brass door of Box 5453. **BTW, if you have not submitted your renewal form and payment, another copy is enclosed; this is the last issue, which will be mailed to you until your payment is received.** Thank you for the opportunity to bring *The Microbibliophile* into your life.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

*“The best teacher is not life, but the crystallized and distilled experience of the most sensitive, reflective, and the most observant of our human beings, and this experience you will find preserved in our great books and nowhere else”.*

*Nathan M. Pusey, 1907-2001, President of Harvard University 1953-1971*

## MINIATURE BOOK REVIEWS:

**Peter Francisco**, by Donald N. Moran, published by Al House, Owl House Press 2009.

Al House has created another wonderful little tome dealing with the intricate facts of American history. It is always interesting to visit people, places, and events dealing with the history of our great country, in particular those people that were there in the beginning of the formation of our country.

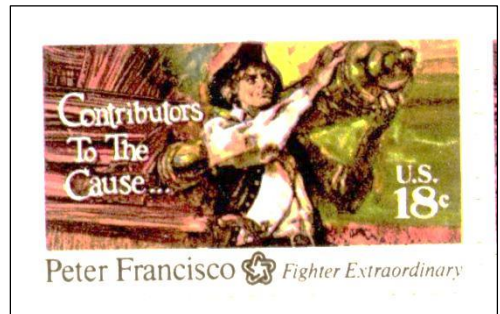


The preface explains, in the words of historian Fred J. Cook, “Wars are fought for the most part by anonymous men, who emerge from obscurity, briefly bear the conflict’s burden, and then return to their unrecorded ways. Yet every now and then one of them achieves fame in their own right.” This is the story of Peter Francisco. Many of the feats attributed to Francisco were exaggerated around the campfires of his fellow Revolutionary War comrades but respected historians have substantiated many as well.

Born in 1760 he arrived in the port of City Point, Virginia as an orphan in 1765. Taken in by a local Judge, Anthony Winston and later apprenticed as a blacksmith. At 16 he was a giant of a young man at 260

pounds. He became part of the movement for American independence, tutored by none other than Patrick Henry, an uncle of Judge Winston.

There are many accounts of Francisco’s bravery in action. His size and strength even at 16 years of age seemed to propel him in the direction of the enemy and his bravery was never a question. He fought in several battles including Brandywine, Stony Point, Camden, Guilford Courthouse, and Yorktown. He was wounded on several occasions but always came back to the front lines. As the Battle of Camden, South Carolina was winding down, Francisco noticed that the American forces were leaving a valuable cannon mired in the mud. Not wanting the cannon to be captured by the British forces he freed the cannon from the mud and by some extraordinary feat of strength carried the 1,000-pound cannon on his shoulders to an area held



by the Continentals. Several eyewitnesses substantiated the story. A U.S. postage stamp, commemorating the event, was issued during the Bicentennial; it is tipped into the tiny tome.

Perhaps it was best stated by General George Washington, who said “without him we would have lost two crucial battles, perhaps the War, and with it our freedom. He was truly a One Man Army.”

After the war was won, Peter returned to his home state of Virginia to pursue his basic education, attending school with young children. He later married and raised a family, working first as a farmer, then as a surveyor of roads.

This is a great story about one of the ‘anonymous men’ who emerge from obscurity to bear the burden of the conflict at hand.

The book is bound using traditional methods, with 12 page signatures secured with silk ribbons. The title is hot stamped in gold on both the front cover as well as the spine. The cover material is imitation leather coated with pyroxylin. The 84 pages of the volume are produced on an archival quality 24 lb. bond paper. The book measures 1 3/4” x 1 5/8”. Excellent workmanship throughout with a very readable font and an edition of 150 copies, each numbered and signed by the publisher. An affordable price, certainly a title to be considered for your miniature history collection, \$24.50, shipping included. Contact AI for your copy today. 📖

Contact information: Al House, Owl House Press, 15575 Tyler Station Road, Beaverdam, VA 23015,  
E-mail: [sales@owlhousepress.com](mailto:sales@owlhousepress.com) or [www.owlhousepress.com](http://www.owlhousepress.com)



**The Lincoln Douglas Debates In Miniature**, Introduction by Graham A. Peck, Ph.D., published by Muriel Underwood, Miscellaneous Graphics, 2012. There are never enough adjectives to define Muriel and the fine little books she makes for our enjoyment. The subjects are certainly varied but I always look forward to opening the cover to see what story is about to unfold. The book for this review is no exception. It was created as a ‘keepsake’ commemorating the Annual Meeting of the Stephen A. Douglas Association, June 2, 2012, held at the Union League Club, in Chicago, and the

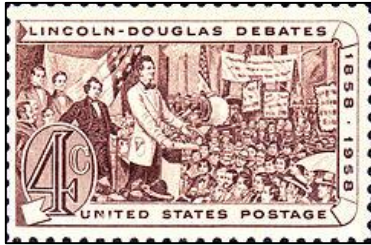
anniversary of the death of Stephen A. Douglas. The debates between Stephen Douglas and Abraham Lincoln in 1858 are certainly famous. Both men were vying for the position of Senator from the State of Illinois. As such, there was a great amount of discussion about the issues of the day and the two men decided to take their arguments to the people in a series of seven debates across the various voting districts.

The Republican Party was established to help prevent the expansion of slavery into the new territories of the United States. Abraham Lincoln was the head of the Republican Party in Illinois. In order to further the cause of his party, he would have to unseat the incumbent, Douglas. With his now famous "House Divided" speech delivered in Springfield, Illinois, on June 16, 1858, Abraham Lincoln launched his campaign to win a seat in the U.S. Senate. In the speech, he accuses his opponent Stephen Douglas of having a ‘care not’ policy on slavery. Douglas won the election, but the seven debates gave Lincoln such a national reputation that they made it possible for his election to the Presidency in 1860.



The abbreviated remarks of the two men are included in the tome, first the remarks by Douglas at Galesburg, Illinois, October 7, 1858. Lincoln follows Douglas with his remarks put forth on October 15, 1858 at Alton, Illinois.

This is a wonderful short journey into the history lessons that most people study in school but as always, there are deeper things to be gained when we are able to 'revisit' such events.

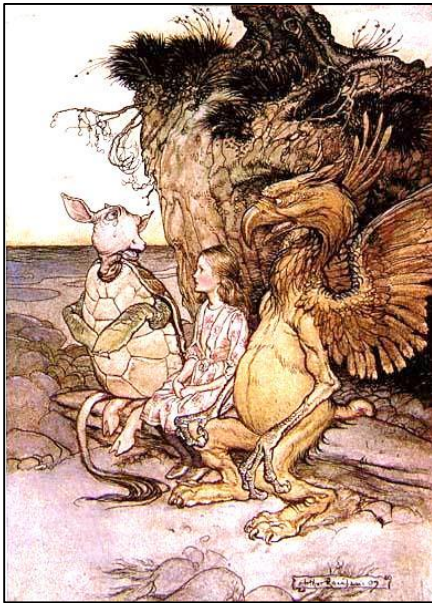


The book is hardbound and covered with a coral colored textured paper with contrasting brown endpapers. The book is 3" x 2 3/4" and contains 14 pages of printed text as well as a colophon, all of the pages are pale ivory in color and hand sewn with a fine stitch. An actual U.S. postage stamp commemorating the debates is tipped into the front of the book. The text was set using Minion Pro and printed on a HP Color LaserJet. The entire book was designed and produced by Muriel and carries her signature as well as that of Graham

Peck. There are 50 copies in the edition. Contact Muriel for pricing and shipping details. 

Contact information: Muriel Underwood, Miscellaneous Graphics, 4431 N. Monticello Ave, Chicago, IL, 60625-5943  
E-mail: [miscgraphics@att.net](mailto:miscgraphics@att.net)

**ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND**, by Lewis Carroll, published by Tony Firman, Plum Park Press, 2011. The original story was published in 1865, written by English author, Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll. The story tells of a girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole into a fantasy world populated by peculiar, anthropomorphic



*'The Gryphon and the Mock Turtle',  
illustration by Arthur Rackham,  
also used on the front cover*

creatures. When *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* was published in 1865, it got poor reviews from the contemporary literary critics, but proved immediately popular with children and parents. The initial print-run sold out quickly, and its early fans included Queen Victoria and Oscar Wilde. It has never been out of print since its first publication, and many different artists have created numerable fine editions, with illustrations. The Plum Park Press edition is based on the 1907 Heinemann edition, with illustrations by Arthur Rackham - 13 color plates and 15 line drawings are included with the publication. Arthur Rackham (1867 -1939) is widely regarded as one of the leading illustrators from the 'Golden Age' of British book illustration which encompassed the years from 1900 - 1917. During this period, there was a strong market for high quality, illustrated books that typically were given as holiday gifts and other special occasions.

The beginning of the story goes back to a 'short boating trip' where the author along with a friend Robinson Duckworth rowed a small boat, with the three children of Henry Liddell, up the Isis River for

some relaxation and activity. The three sisters were Alice, Lorina, and Edith. As they rowed the river, Dodgson unfolded a story about a little girl named Alice who was looking for an adventure. The girls loved the story and asked Dodgson to write the story down for them. One thing led to another and Dodgson expanded the original plot to include the twelve chapters as published as well as including additional research on the habits and traits of the animals included. The first copy, a pre-published version was presented to Alice in 1864.



*The Mad Tea Party'*  
illustration by Arthur Rackham

The first chapter is titled 'Down the Rabbit-Hole'. Alice was feeling bored while sitting on the riverbank with her sister, when she notices a talking, clothed White Rabbit with a pocket watch run past. She followed it down a rabbit hole when suddenly she falls a long way to a curious hall with many locked doors of all sizes. From here, everything unfolds and this sets the stage for all of the adventures that follow, with the many characters that are introduced to the reader.

Everyone knows about the 'Mad Tea Party'. However, how about the chapters: 'Advice from the Caterpillar' and 'Pig and the Pepper'. These are quite unusual adventures as well. Interesting that another author, Gordon Murray, chose these chapters as 'stand-alone' miniature tomes not too many years ago. The story continues to unfold around one new adventure after another with such famous and notable characters as the 'Cheshire Cat', 'The Hatter', 'The Queen of Hearts', and 'The Marching Hare'.

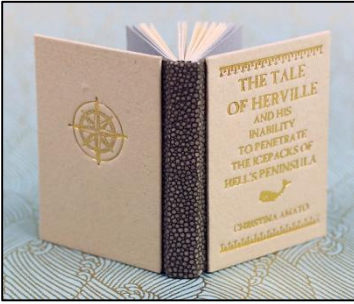
As the story ends, Alice's sister wakes her up for tea, brushing what turns out to be some leaves and not a shower of playing cards from Alice's face. Alice leaves her sister on the bank to imagine all the curious happenings for herself. The closing line of the published story:

*"Lastly, she pictured to herself how this same little sister of hers would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman; and how she would keep, through all her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather about her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a strange tale, perhaps even with the dream of Wonderland of long ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days." THE END*

The Plum Park edition features a rose-colored printed cloth cover and printed endpapers as used in the style of the 'Heinemann edition'. The book consists of 260 pages, and has overall dimensions of 2 11/16" x 2 1/8" x 11/16" inches. The Plum Park Press miniature edition of *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND* consists of 12 copies, each numbered and signed by Tony Firman. The typeface is Clarendon Light 6/7, very readable on a bright white paper. The book is done with excellent quality and operation throughout. The price is \$40 each, plus \$5 for shipping and handling. 📖

Contact information: Tony Firman, PO Box 507, Hazlet, TX 76052, E-mail: [TonyFirman@earthlink.net](mailto:TonyFirman@earthlink.net) or [www.tonyfirmanbookbinding.com](http://www.tonyfirmanbookbinding.com)





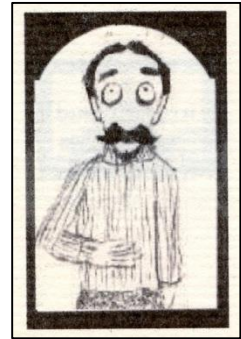
### **The Tale of Herville, and His Inability to Penetrate the**

**Icepacks of Hell's Peninsula**, published by Christina Amato, CAW, 2010. This is the story of a man named Herville, whose dream it is to enter the whale blubber business. By some strange act of fate, he is commissioned as the captain of a 19<sup>th</sup> century whaling ship, 'The Surfeit'. I do not know if the name of the ship is an indication of how well it was expected to do in the 'whaling business' or by another 'act of fate' to define Herville. The book was written, illustrated, printed, and bound by Christina Amato. The story is a gritty tale, incorporating

such timeless sea subjects as whales, ice madness, and mustaches.

As the story unfolds across the deck of 'The Surfeit', we quickly learn that Herville is not in possession of those skills required by a master of a 'whaling vessel'.

However, as you can see from the illustration, Herville was a connoisseur of the 'great mustaches'. Herville tries to prove to his crew that he does have the skills of a master but does not seem to make much progress. He begins to spend a lot of time in his cabin doing of all things, grooming his mustache. Not having much luck with the spotting of whales they sail north, to Hell's Peninsula. Late in the season the ship becomes frozen in the ice, ice madness begins to take over Herville and the crew. Not even a steady ration of 'Captain John's Lead & Kidney Chowder' can keep the men in the right minds. The first mate runs off into the night with the remaining sled dogs. Poor Herville decides to pack the last two crates of 'Sir Withertrush's Fancy Mustache Pomade for Gentlemen' into a sled and then he set off across the ice to find help.



*Herville,  
'Captain' of The Surfeit*

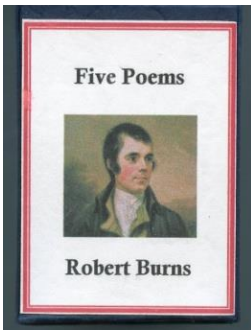


*North, South East, or West?*

Needless to say, after a short time he is hopelessly lost and enters the last words into his journal, "Forward Ever Forward". Years pass and his frozen body was discovered; it was then moved to an obscure history museum where it remains today.

The book is 2" x 1 5/8" and is bound in a stunning combination of ivory colored handmade paper and pale green stingray skin. The covers are printed in a gold foil. As you can see the front cover is very elaborate and the nautical design carries through to the rear cover with an imprint of a 'compass rose'. There are 23 illustrations to complement the text. The text is printed on the verso and is paired with an illustration on each recto page, the pages are unnumbered. The text was printed on an Epson inkjet printer with archival ink, set with an 8 pt. Baskerville font on Zerkall Ingres paper. Certainly a well-done tome of the highest quality and attention to detail, down to the tiny silk headband. Designed to be read, it opens with excellent operation. 'Herville' is a limited edition of 20 copies; each signed and numbered by the author, \$100, plus shipping \$3.00/U.S. \$5.00/all other. 📖

Contact information: Christina Amato, E-mail: [xamato@yahoo.com](mailto:xamato@yahoo.com) or [www.etsy.com/shop/CAWorkst](http://www.etsy.com/shop/CAWorkst)



**Six Poems**, by Robert Burns, published by Stephen Byrne, The Final Score, 2012. This is a collection of six small books all presented in one slipcase, the illustration showing this favorite poet of Scotland is provided on the end of the slipcase. Robert Burns 1759 – 1796 was a Scottish poet and lyricist, widely regarded as the ‘national poet’ of Scotland. He created more than 500 songs and poems, which are highly regarded across the world. He is the best known of the poets who have written in the Scots language, although much of his writing is also in English and a light Scots dialect, accessible to an audience beyond Scotland. He also wrote in standard English, and in these, his political or civil commentary is often at its bluntest.

The collection of miniatures presented by Stephen and Marian Byrne includes the following titles:

**To A Mouse:** 1785, the full title, ‘To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough’. According to legend, Burns wrote the poem after finding a nest full of mice during the winter in a local farm field. The poem talks to all of those things in life, for either mice or men. An interesting side point about this particular poem, John Steinbeck took the title of his 1937 novel ‘Of Mice and Men’ from a line contained in the poem: “The best laid schemes ‘o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft agley” (often paraphrased in English as “The best-laid plans of mice and men / Often go awry”).

**To a Louse:** 1786, in this poem the narrator notices an upper class lady in church, with a louse that is roving, unnoticed, around in her bonnet. The narrator chastises the louse for not realizing how important his hostess was, and then reflects that, to a louse, we are all equal prey.

**The Cottar’s Saturday Night:** 1785, a long sentimental poem is one of the best known and most admired of all his works.

**Address to a Haggis:** 1785, another short poem that immortalizes the main course of many an early Scottish meal.

**Scotch Drink:** 1785, this is a rather long and complex poem dealing with poverty and the possibility of happiness for the poor folks.

**Tam O’Shanter:** 1791, a long poem about Tam who spent most of the night enjoying the drink with some of his friends in the public house, then on the trip home during the early morning hours witnesses a strange sight. The sight he sees is Alloway Kirk, ablaze with light, where a weird hallucinatory dance involving witches and warlocks, open coffins and even the Devil himself is taking place.

The six volumes are each bound in a medium-blue book cloth with contrasting red endpapers. The books all measure to be 2 ¾” x 2 ¾” and are each done with a rich looking dust jacket carrying the title of the poem as well as the illustration from a portrait of Burns. Some of the poems have additional illustrations included, each from *The National Burns*, edited by Rev. George Gilfillan, 1878. The pages of text, in each volume, are printed with a fine font on pale ivory paper the color matching the dust jackets. The quality of printing, binding, and presentation are excellent. One last comment, the slipcase also contains a bright red ‘pull ribbon’ to help with the removal of the volumes. The review copy is a ‘pre-publication’ copy. 📖



*Tam O’Shanter, lifting a pint and enjoying the evening!*

Contact Information: Stephen Byrne, Castletown Wigstoun Road,  
Sorbie Wigstounshire, Scotland DG8 8EL,  
E-mail: sb@finalscore.demon.co.uk

**The Sixth Year of the Bo Press**, published by Pat Sweet, Bo Press, 2012. The past year was a very productive year for Pat Sweet; books, more books, and a new venture, medieval related book furniture. Some people just love to be busy and always working on something new, that is Pat Sweet.

Since its founding in 2007, Bo Press has published an end-of-year synopsis volume as a souvenir of the year's work. This past year 2012 included the publication of nine books and several pieces of medieval 'book related furniture' miniatures.

The titles of the 2012 publications are:


*Baba Yagga*, limited edition of 20 copies, 48 pages, 'not to be read alone or in a dark room'  
*A Catalogue of Printed Samples*, 110 pages, 'a designer's dreamland'  
*Dry Bones*, 96 pages, 'everything you would want to know about the 206 bones in your body'  
*Eau de Cologne*, 62 pages, 'history of the waters'  
*The Earl King*, limited edition of 20 copies, 'another story, not for a dark night'  
*The Mapping of the Erie*, Limited edition of 10 copies, 'how to get from here to there'  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 42 pages, 'a journey to remember, 14 pop-ups'  
*Miss Fogarty's Christmas Cake*, 16 pages, 'a holiday song to be remembered'  
*Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 96 pages, 'a complete collection, all 154 sonnets'

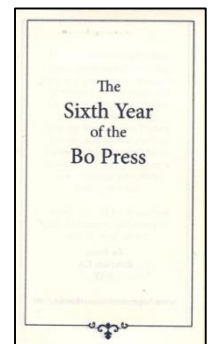
Some of the Medieval Miniatures:

*Medieval Library Desk*  
*Explorer's Book Case*  
*Terrestrial and Celestial Maps and Globes*  
*Alchemical Book Case*  
*Medieval Library Desk*  
*Chained Lovecraft Book Case*  
*Two-Sided Medieval Book Case*  
*Medieval Reader's Desk*  
*Mathematical Models*



*Medieval Library Desk*

The 'sixth year' book is bound in brown kid leather, in a medieval style, with raised bands and a brass closure anchored with a chain to the bottom of the spine. There are decorative brass bosses above and below the closure, and a paper title on the spine, 86 pages. Included is a pop-up from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 're-printed pages' from each of the other 8 books published during the year. The book is 3" x 1 7/8" and completed with the wonderful quality that we have come to expect from Bo Press. 



*Title Page*

Contact information: Pat Sweet, Bo Press Miniature Books, 231 East Blaine Street, Riverside, CA 92507  
E-mail: [bopress@charter.net](mailto:bopress@charter.net) or [www.bopressminiaturebooks.com](http://www.bopressminiaturebooks.com)

## **ACHILLE J. ST. ONGE, 1913 – 1978, A Short Biography and Introduction: By Jim Brogan**

Achille J. St. Onge was a renaissance man in the world of miniature books. He was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts and lived for most of his life in Worcester, Massachusetts. As I have explained briefly in previous issues of *The Microbibliophile*, 2013 is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Onge's birth and what more fitting an occasion to revisit his life and work in the special world of miniature books. In each of the issues, for the this year, I plan to explore and bring to you the details of his published books, examples of known variants, information about public and private collections of his books, the authors, the printers and binders he worked with, recollections from his friends, and in general, I hope an enjoyable journey.

St. Onge, while a young high school student at the North High School, in Worcester, he began his publishing career as the editor of the local 'monthly' paper, *The Worcesterian*. He sold ads for the paper as well as arranged for its printing, and solicited friends to write articles. Robert K. Shaw, the librarian at the Worcester Public Library and an accomplished microbibliophile, wrote an article about miniature books for St. Onge to include with *The Worcesterian*. The text of the Shaw article is also included in this issue for your reading pleasure, (see page 25). I do not know how but by some fate of occurrence, James D. Henderson, of *LXIVMOS* fame, had the opportunity to have a copy of *The Worcesterian* and read the piece about miniature books. Henderson did live in the Boston area, at that time, which was not far from Worcester. Henderson was so impressed with the article and *The Worcesterian*, that he mentioned it in the 'Oct-Nov 1929, page 6' issue of the *LXIVMOS*, the following was printed: "The first issue of a little magazine well worth reading and entitled 'The Worcesterian' had just come to hand. This issue has a splendid article on 'Wee Books' by Robert K. Shaw, the eminent Worcester Librarian". St. Onge would have been 16 years old at this time, in 1929. Henderson and St. Onge corresponded and Henderson urged him to publish a miniature book. Apparently St. Onge discussed the idea with Robert K. Shaw and the fruit of the plan was finally published in 1935, the first St. Onge miniature, *Noel, Christmas Echoes Down the Ages*, by Robert K. Shaw. St. Onge was 22 years old when this first miniature was published. Prior to his first miniature St. Onge did publish as his first book, *The Tariff and the Debenture*, by Hugh R. Conn in 1931. This volume was produced with a stiff wrapper, 5 1/2" x 3 5/8". The inscription in the copy that he gave to his mother as a gift reads, "To Mother: - It is with great pleasure that I present to you the very first copy of the first publication to bear my imprint. Achille J. St. Onge, Dec. 15, 1931".

During this early period, St. Onge also collaborated with Henderson to publish a 'small format', though not miniature book, titled *Lilliputian Newspapers*, in 1935. Another example of an early work by St. Onge is an article that was published in the *Book Collector's Packet*, Volume 3, Number 4, page 6, December 1938, 'Notes of Miniature Books'. I have included a reprint of this article with this issue, please refer to (page 28). The article provides a glimpse of St. Onge's interest in history and printing, in particular in relation to miniature books, what had been done in the past and that which was on the contemporary scene in 1938.

St. Onge published 46 different miniature books throughout his career, as well as fifteen 'non-miniature' books, and two periodicals, certainly a large body of work to be produced as a hobby. Future articles will discuss all of his work in detail. Remember that he published books as a hobby and selected topics that, in his criteria, would have a wide appeal to a general audience not necessarily an audience of only miniature book collectors. Inaugural addresses of U.S. Presidents was a favorite topic, as was history, and works by famous writers such as Thoreau and Emerson.

In fact, his books did not become very popular with collectors until the early 1960's. A parallel can be drawn between St. Onge and James D. Henderson. Both men enjoyed their hobby of miniature books as a hobby and not a capital business venture. Both men encouraged others to become involved in the world of miniature books. First, Henderson was the publisher of the *LXIVMOS* in the late 1920's. Then St. Onge contributed to the world of miniature books, in greatly expanded detail beyond his own miniature books, with a publication known as *The Miniature Book Collector*. The publication was somewhat short lived, printed over a two-year period 1960 -1962 with only 8 issues. The editor was Ruth Adomeit. I am not exactly sure how Adomeit and St. Onge came to be the editor and publisher of *The Miniature Book Collector*. However, the little journal hit the sweet spot with many of the collectors of the day and with the rich subject content contained in each issue the popularity of miniature book was increased. Collecting of existing books as well as the creation of an expanded market for newly published books during this period is attributable to *The Miniature Book Collector*. Unfortunately, production costs were high and subscription receipts not high enough to cover expenses. The world of miniature books was enjoying a renaissance through the work of St. Onge and his editor.

As a publisher, St. Onge maintained that only the highest quality standards for fine printing and binding were to be used for his books. Over and over again he received accolades from many of the most knowledgeable and respected people in the field. Louis Bondy, a famous London miniature book dealer, said in his publication, *Miniature Books*, page 169, "Without any doubt, an outstanding contribution was made by a dedicated amateur turned miniature book publisher, my late friend Achille J. St. Onge of Worchester, Massachusetts, USA, who was known as 'Archie' to thousands of book lovers all over the world. With an uncanny instinct he chose texts which had wide appeal and his standards of production were very high, reflecting his almost fanatical devotion to the world of minibibliophily." Another accolade came from Clarence S. Brigham, the former president of the American Antiquarian Society, who praised St. Onge in his book, *Fifty Years of Collecting Americana*. Brigham wrote, "They are the finest examples of design, typography, and binding that could be devised. . .No publisher has ever equaled the publications which Mr. St. Onge has consistently issued over the years."

According to articles written by the 'Worcester Sunday Telegram', St. Onge was a large twinkle-eyed quick smiling family man. Publishing was only a hobby for him and never more. In fact, he was a publisher; he was not an author, not a printer, nor a binder. He explained, "My job is to pick a subject and an author, design the book, put up the money to pay the bills, and take the chance on getting it back on sales." He felt that his hobby was one of the reasons that he remained jolly and good-natured throughout his life. On his twenty-fifth anniversary in publishing, the local newspaper, the 'Worcester Sunday Telegram' ran a large feature article about St. Onge on December 18, 1960. St. Onge was quoted with saying, "I just love books, I guess. In fact, I love all beautiful things. It is hard to put into words. Doing good work just makes me feel good." He also quoted the verse by the poet Abraham Cowley:

*"Prize little things, nor think it ill,  
That men small things preserve"*

That sums it up in 12 words. If along our journey you have information that you would like to share with everyone, as always please send it along, as all of our readers love to read about the details, some well-known, some newly brought to light, or even some obscure. 📖

*Editor's Note: this is the first St. Onge article in our year long series, if you have some special information or would like to write or contribute to the series, please contact me at your convenience.*

**MINIATURE BOOK SOCIETY**  
**2012 DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD WINNER**  
**THE MAKING of SWELLS and SPINES:**  
**By Christina Amato**



photo courtesy of  
Miniature Book Society

The story of Herville began several years back and is documented in the miniature book *The Tale of Herville, and His Inability to Penetrate the Icepacks of Hell's Peninsula*, that I published by 2010. Herville was a man who had plans to make his fortune in the whale blubber business but things did not work out just as planned.

Going back a few more years to explain the story more completely, I should say that like many others, I came to bookbinding in a roundabout way. As a visual artist, the materials involved intrigued me; paper, thread, wax, and leather seemed like the perfect canvas. Miniature books held a natural attraction, as I had been involved with micrographology, or drawings, which are created out of miniscule and sometimes microscopic writing, for several years.

I was also interested in publishing my own little illustrated books. *Swells and Spines, or, the Man Who Bound at Sea* is the prequel to *Herville and His Inability to Penetrate the Icepacks of Hell's Peninsula*, which I wrote approximately 10 years before. (It will become obvious to those who read 'Hell's Peninsula' why a prequel, rather than a sequel, was necessary!) 'Swells and Spines' follows Herville as he seeks his fortune on one of the 'great bookbinding ships of yesterday'. Dealing with sharp and sometimes hot tools on the ceaselessly pitching deck of a ship while perfecting a painstakingly precise craft is only one of the challenges he faces. I choose eel skin for the spine, perhaps for obvious reasons. Eel skin is an ideal material to work with, as it is quite thin, requires minimal paring, and comes in a variety of jewel-like colors. Bookbinding at sea might seem like an odd choice of theme, but it seemed like an apt choice to me as I have navigated the world of book conservation. It is quite usual these days for a book conservator to have to pack up their bundle of tools and sail off in search of the next friendly port every year or so. What bookbinder has not felt at sea once and a while? Who has not examined the results of their gold tooling efforts and wondered if maybe the floor had been pitching as they worked?

I am currently working on the next book in the Herville series, 'Wind and Leaves', which involves hot air ballooning and tea. In addition to the Herville series, I have been working on a series of miniature 'How To' books. I created *How to Tame a Miniature Book* several years ago, which deals with the challenges - sometimes life threatening! - of wrangling with miniatures. *How to Make a Miniature Book* is my latest edition, and contains some of my more useful tips on the physical creation of these books that I have accumulated over the years.

### *The Technical Details*

'Swells and Spines' is bound in eel skin and handmade paper, with sewn silk headbands. The cover is stamped in gold foil. It is printed on Zerkall Ingres paper, in 8-point Baskerville Old Face. As you can see the front cover carries an elaborate border as well as an image of a 'square-rigged' sailing ship. The nautical design carries through to the rear cover with an imprint of a 'sea-serpent'. There are 36 illustrations to complement the text. The text is printed on the



verso and is paired with an illustration on each recto page, the pages are unnumbered. Also available is an optional clamshell box, covered in handmade paste paper, titled in gold foil. It is 2" x 1 1/2", as is 'Hell's Peninsula', which is bound in stingray skin and handmade paper. 'Swells and Spines' is produced as a series of 20 books, each signed and numbered.

As a book conservator, I am always on the lookout for structures that would lend themselves to miniature books. The 'quarter joint' binding proposed by J. A. Szirmai immediately struck me as an ideal candidate, and especially for editions. Its design results in a book that opens extremely well, which is always a challenge to achieve in miniatures. Opening well was a main concern in designing the book, as it is designed to be read, not to sit idly on a shelf. 📖

*Contact information: Christina Amato, E-mail: [xamato@yahoo.com](mailto:xamato@yahoo.com) or [www.etsy.com/shop/CAWorkst](http://www.etsy.com/shop/CAWorkst)*

*Editor's Note: Congratulations to Christina on being one of the 2012 MBS Distinguished Book Award Winners, a job well done for sure. Some of Christina's miniature books are for sale at her on-line store and more of her bindings can be seen at [www.Christina.birdseyecrafts.com](http://www.Christina.birdseyecrafts.com)*

## **THE ARTS AND SCIENCES OF MAKING MEDIEVAL BOOKS:**

### **Part 2- Starting the Medieval Book**

**By Randy Asplund**

I make medieval books. What does that actually mean? What makes a book 'medieval' as opposed to 'contemporary'? The answer to that question requires an imaginary journey into the past. A great way to appreciate the answer is to start by considering how books are made today.

Every book has to start with an author. Today, we have the luxury of sitting down on the sofa with a laptop computer (just as I am now, writing this article), and banging out the story on a keyboard. Before that, we had typewriters. If we make a mistake today, or want to move text around, it is a simple matter of delete & re-write, or cut & paste to a new position. When we are happy with the edit, we can move right along to printing it out for review. Legally speaking, we even own the copyright to the work we created from the moment we created it. The only exception is if we were under a contract that made us an employee writing for another entity. When finished, we might then send the completed 'manuscript' and any associated artwork, usually photographs, to an editor at a publishing house. There, it and the illustrations will be reconfigured and formatted. Today, this is usually done digitally. They send the digital files to the printer, where the book is run off on printing machines, sent down a conveyor belt to where it is collated, stacked, glued, a cover slapped on it, and then it is put in a box to be mailed to a seller.

In ancient times, things could not be more different. Let us look at the creation of a book, but from a medieval perspective. Imagine a time with very little automation and everything was done by hand. There was no electricity, so no power tools. Most of your materials grew in the land surrounding you. Trade for the rest happened slowly, by mule cart. 'Running water' was what you got when you poured from a pitcher into a bowl, and good water came off the roof. Even the word 'manuscript' meant something different. It meant that the composition was actually written by someone using a pen, directly onto the page, not something that was printed or typed. The inks and colors had to be made by hand. The pages of the book had to be made by hand from the skins of animals. Trees were felled by axe and handsaw, cut into boards, planed, carved, and thus made into book covers. The brushes used to illustrate each individual copy were hand-fashioned from weasel hairs tied together with silk or linen threads, then stuffed into a bird-quill tube and stuck to

a wooden handle that was also carved by hand. Metal fittings for the book's cover were sculpted in wax before casting, or chiseled from hand-beaten sheet metal before being sawn and stamped with chisels and punches that were also made by hand, forged by a smith.

It seems like a lot of work and it is. Especially if you consider the work that went into making the tools to do the work in the first place! Few of these craftsmen were paid much more than peasant's wages. When one totals up the price of the book there is a lot of items to consider. We have the cost of the herd of a couple of hundred goats for the pages, the cost of collecting and processing all of the colors and inks, the cost of hiring calligraphers to write out the entire book, the cost of artists to hand-paint the illustrations and other decorations, and to use hand-beaten gold leaf in their designs. We also have the costs of the carpenter, the leather maker, the metal smith, and the bookbinder. When it is all said and done, our book is now worth a small fortune. A fancy book was worth a larger fortune. Compare that to your modern paperback novel and suddenly you realize what a miracle our own age has provided.

Let us look back at our medieval author. What would he use in place of a keyboard? Typically, it would be a set of waxed tablets. Why not use the same kind of parchment that the book would eventually be written upon? Because it is expensive to write on animal skin, and it is



very hard to erase. However, a wooden board, cut thin and recessed between 1/32nd to 1/16th of an inch with a layer of beeswax colored with soot from an oil lamp, makes a nice surface to scratch letters upon. He pulls out his needle-like metal stylus and begins to write. Mistakes were wiped flat with the wedge-shaped reverse end of the stylus. Writing small, he fills tablet after tablet. He may have hundreds of tablet sides being written (re-using the several he owns when he is happy with the chapters).

Now he has to get this information down on a real page. The writing in his waxed tablets can only be read in raking light, so our first forgotten master enters the scene. This is the calligrapher, or 'scribe'. Our author must read his own writing and dictate it slowly enough for the calligrapher to copy down every word. The scribe's pen is made from a reed or more typically, the feather of a goose. The fletching has been removed, the haft cut short like a modern pen length, and the tip carved to a point with a slit to convey the ink.

#### *Preparing inks and quills*

No big fluffy ostrich feathers billow over the scribe's hand. This is a tool. He dips his pen into ink made by crushing and boiling the woody oak growth surrounding young wasp larvae, which after being strained; the fluid was mixed with iron sulfate to make it black, and the sap of acacia trees added to make it stick to the page. This imported sap is called 'gum arabic' and it is the same adhesive used today in the manufacture of modern watercolors and gouache paints.



*Medieval scribe at work*

After a great amount of time, effort and expense, the manuscript is written. It is complete but it is only one copy. How could it be ‘published’? The propagation of the medieval book was not at all conducted like the way we think of publishing. For one thing, there was no such thing as copyright law back then. Anybody was able to copy any literary work as long as they had a physical copy on hand to use as an exemplar. The only control an author might have over copying was to whom and when he loaned his original. As certain books began to be needed in universities, which began to spring-up in the late 1100’s, book sellers known as ‘stationers’ would hire scribes to write books that would later be bound and sold to their customers. The stationer would show the model to the young nobleman, agree with him on the design, and then send sections out to several scribes who would each contribute a section of the book. In this way, more

copies could be made with greater speed.

Over time, copyright laws were created to help the author earn income from his creations. By limiting the right to reproduce a work to its creator for a limited amount of time, it became possible to earn income by licensing these works. Then, when a certain amount of time had passed, the work would enter into the Public Domain so anyone could make a copy. Copying the original work of another without direct permission became illegal during the short span of years an original work was protected. But that period passes, and all of the books made in the middle ages are now completely within the ‘public domain’ because they predate these laws and ample time has passed. Therefore, anyone may copy them.

However, before we just go download an ancient text, it is very important for today’s book artist to understand modern copyright law, and the reality of it that seems to deviate in practice from what is intended by the actual written law. I am not a lawyer, so the following should not be taken as ‘expert legal advice’ in any way, but rather, consider this explanation as encouragement for you to explore the subject more fully. In our world of convoluted laws, where financial might seems to most often define ‘right’, many institutions today, including libraries and religion based universities tell the public that they own the copyright to these ancient books and/or photographic images of these books, presented in print and online. They often justify this by claiming that they took photographs, and since taking photos requires skill, they sometimes claim that this equates to original work. However, any look at the actual law governing this matter appears pretty clear.

By examining U.S. Copyright Law, which is readily available online, their claims appear unsustainable. The reason is that their photos are faithful two dimensional copies of two dimensional objects, made to look as much like the original as possible. If that is not the very definition of a copy, then I do not know what is. To own copyright, one must be the creator of the original, not the copy, and the definition of a two dimensional copy does not distinguish between the copying methods. Granted, while it is legal to copyright a ‘derivative’ work, that derivative work must be visually different and only the new, different portions of that expression qualify for being copyrighted. It is ironic, but one would think that the very institutions dedicated to preserving knowledge and sharing it with the public would be the last to claim copyright ownership of ancient books, especially since this is an issue about controlling our right to our

cultural heritage. I commend such institutions as the Walters Gallery in Baltimore, MD for their stand in support of sharing of these treasures of humanity.

Another place where you need to be careful is in the text itself. Your original text from a medieval book written in Latin or medieval French, etc. is in public domain, but the translation into contemporary language is copyrightable to the translator. It is a new expression in a new language, and therefore quite different. You need to check the date of the translation and the date of the author's death to make sure that the work's copyright has expired.

Let us think back now on our scribe writing a manuscript, and consider where he got the pages in the first place. As with most of the materials used in the middle ages, the page comes from natural materials. North of the Alps, the young, smooth calf's skin was used for most book pages. Southwards, it was more common to use sheep and goat skin. No part of an animal was wasted in those days. For the page, we start with the freshly flayed skin. It must be soaked and washed before it can be processed. Parchment is essentially a rawhide that has been stretched very tightly on a frame and scraped very thin with a knife. The stretching makes it whiter and more opaque. Before stretching though, the skin must have the flesh rubbed off of it with a blunt knife. Then it must be soaked and agitated repeatedly for over a week in a water treated with hydrated lime. This loosens the hair so it can be rubbed away from the skin. The next step is to soak it again the same way, and for the same amount of time, to further process the fatty surface and make it easier to remove. The calcium from the lime will affect paint colors so the skin must eventually be rinsed free of it. It can then be strung tightly on a large wooden frame and scraped very thin with a special curved knife called the 'lunelarium' for the crescent moon it resembles. This is very hard work indeed.



*Scraping the goat skin with a lunelarium*


There is much more to the process before the parchment is ready to be used, such as smoothing the flesh side with pumice stones (as we would use sand paper today), rubbing it down with powder to create the right surface, and then rubbing it with resin to prevent the ink from bleeding. Only after all of these preparations could the scribe compose the layout of the page and add ruling lines to guide the calligraphy. That is right. A medieval book was written with ruling lines, just like we find in a modern notebook. The ruling lines in many medieval books remain visible today. Someone had to make a template, and lay it over the folded pages so that opposite page rulings would match. Then they used a 'parchment pricker' like a small awl to prick guide marks along the page edges, indicating where the columns and every line of text through the entire book would be. Each ruling line was scribed on each page by laying a ruling bar from one guide hole to the opposite guide hole, and then drawing a line with either a quill pen, a hard metal point leaving a shallow furrow, or a soft metal point leaving a line much like a pencil. This alone can take quite a while!

During the writing process, the scribe left openings for larger initials, for illustrations, and for titles. Someone else would come back later and insert all of these things. As he wrote, the scribe would change back and forth from black or brown ink to red, depending on what he was writing. For the most elaborate and resplendent manuscripts, the parchment might be dyed a color such as purple, and the text could be written in genuine silver and gold.

When the writing of the book was finally completed, it had to be checked by a corrector. Mistakes were inevitable. Errors had to be scraped away with the penknife or stricken with a line. The correct words were then written above or in the margin. Even so, many mistakes slipped through, and sometimes the meaning of great works of literature have been changed because of simple, unnoticed copying errors.

The text was completed only when another master, known as the ‘rubricator’, went through the manuscript, adding colored initials in gold, red, blue and green, and decorative strokes on special letters. When finished, the written portion of the manuscript was a work of amazing hand-crafted beauty, the product of many skilled individuals, working sometimes as a team, but always in sequence. For many books, the next step would be to go to the bookbinder. That now forgotten master would gather the loose pages and build a structure to keep them in place. The rare book that was being made for special use in the church, or was being made for the ostentatious collection of a wealthy noble, would first be handed instead to the illuminator for illustrated decoration.

We call the art of decorating the pages of a book ‘illumination’ because of the lavish use of fine gold and silver foils, and of metal pigments that would flash in the dim firelight of the medieval indoor settings, illuminating the page with reflected light. It is hard to imagine such an effect today because we are out of context. We live in rooms filled with artificial lamp light, often routinely flickered with the dancing light and colors from the television. The only light in a book we see is from something like a ‘Kindle’. We do not live in the darkness of a home lit only by small flames burning in a seven-centimeter bowl of oil. Nor do many of us still associate the spark of light with wisdom, holy inspiration, or divine presence. Such a light reflecting from the gold in a book brought to mind the holy spark, especially when it came out of a holy book. Imagine the awe of the medieval farmer or shopkeeper who, when attending services, witnessed such uncommon wonders!

With the next issue, it will be my pleasure to take you on our journey through a world of color and science. I promise, you will never look at color the same way again. In the meantime, I invite you to look at some of these processes on [www.RandyAsplund.com](http://www.RandyAsplund.com). 


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## **START THE PRESS:**

**By Jim Brogan**

Next issue:

- Famous Miniature Book Person article will be about Ruth Elizabeth Adomeit
- More about A. J. St. Onge, and his miniatures, regular books, and periodicals
- Two new books from Bo Press, *Giants*, available in both 1” and ½” sizes

Keep me posted on what is going on at your press or your collection. We love the details. 

## MEET THE COLLECTOR:

### Pat Pistner

I collect the history of the book in small format. The ‘hub-bub’ about 3” does not interest me. My preference is for books that are 2 ¾ inches or less, but I will go up to 4 inches to provide examples of different binding styles or subject matter to include interesting examples from across the ages.

In the process of commissioning ‘The Pistner House’, my miniature 18th century French townhouse, I determined that every home of that period would have a library, and my miniature library would have real books. That life-changing decision led me to collecting miniature books and I have never looked back. Bookish people are the most interesting group and collecting books has been a very fulfilling experience. Another aspect of collecting is sharing your knowledge with other people, which I do by lecturing and inviting groups to my home for a personal tour. I describe ‘The Pistner House’ as ‘a three-dimensional thesis of my studies’. I spent years studying Louis-period France and the furniture and design of that time before commissioning the townhouse. It was originally intended to be seen only in my home. However, it had been on loan to the Naples Museum of Art for 6 years and had been the focal point of their exhibition, ‘Masters of Miniature’.

I trace my love of design to my youth in Chicago and to a dollhouse I received as a 6-year-old from my grandmother. I loved decorating and changing the rooms and imagining them as little worlds. It sparked an interest in interior design, art, and architecture that has carried through all my life. Another influence was the Art Institute of Chicago, where I frequently visited with my family. There I saw the famous ‘Thorne Rooms’ and became fascinated by Eugene Kupjack’s work. In addition to decorating several full-sized homes, I created six dollhouses for my granddaughters and niece over a 16-year period. Then, 22 years ago, I decided it was my turn. I wanted to make a special home of the period I loved the most. It has been an amazing adventure creating this little world, and a labor of love both the miniature French townhouse and the miniature books.

There are about 4,000 books in my collection and I am adding fewer as the years go by. In fact, four years ago, an article appeared in *Fine Books and Collections* magazine about Ian Kahn of ‘Lux Mentis’ bringing his 11 year old son to an ABAA Book Fair where young Aidan sold some miniature books. This intrigued me, and I wrote to Ian suggesting a collaboration to train the next generation of booksellers. We decided on a consignment of 100 books for Aidan to catalogue and sell at the MBS Conclave. This was an exciting experience for all concerned. Aidan dove in with enthusiasm, catalogued, photographed, put it all together - and liked being ‘in charge’. Ian said it was a bonding experience for the family and a pleasure to watch Aidan go through the process of editing and producing a catalogue. Although Aidan asked for Ian’s opinion as to which tomes should include a photo, Aidan made the final decisions. Kudos to Aidan! As collectors, we should all encourage him as well as other young connoisseurs to continue their studies and enjoyment of our dearly loved miniature books.

Recently, Michael Garbett offered a lovely 1794 Dutch almanac, bound in green parchment with its original clasps and



1794 Dutch Almanac



silver writing stylus. Its silver tooling has long since oxidized to black. The interesting thing is that it was printed for the Leiden bookseller Hendrik Coster and his name was block stamped on the upper cover, something that my friends at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Royal Library), in The Hague, have never seen before on an almanac. The upper cover has the female figure of freedom leaning against a book (the Bible). It is possible that this was one of a select few copies bound for important clients and family of Coster as the lower cover has a collection of the flags and coats of arms of the seven Dutch provinces. As I collect to condition, this tiny tome meets my standards and is a lovely addition to my collection.

Picking a favorite is extremely difficult, in fact, it would be more appropriate to select my favorites. However, *Septem Psalmi poenitentiales, cum allis multis devotissimo orationibus, Ac kalendario gregoriano* ranks among the top of that group. Published by Nicolaus Misserinus in Venice in 1598, this tome measures a mere 2 ¼” x 1 ½”, quite small for that time. Nicolò Missirini (Miserini, Misserinus), was active at Venice from 1589 until about 1630. He worked in a consortium directed by the famous Giunti family, which specialized in the production of liturgical and devotional works. The covers are beveled rock crystal contained within a gilt frame. The undersides of the covers are painted in reverse in the verre églomisé style, depicting the Adoration of the Magi and St Francis Receiving the Stigmata. The edges are gilt, gauffered and hand-painted. The edition itself appears not to be in any of the standard bibliographies, or in any of the library catalogues consulted. The luxurious nature of this binding, combined with the puzzle of this edition, raises the possibility that this copy may have been specially published by Misserinus for an exceptional client.



*Septem Psalmi poenitentiales,*  
Nicolaus Misserinus, Venice, 1598

My collection covers the history of the book, so there is no individual author or press that I focus to. Whenever I have been asked about the cost of my miniature French townhouse, the answer is simple: More than I expected and less than it is worth. That applies to my books as well. The most expensive book is an 11 page accordion-fold, solid gold sheet tome incised with the text of the Lotus Sutra in Chinese. Unfortunately, there is no date, nor a place of publication provided. It is larger than 3 inches but falls within the 4-inch European standard. I have engaged an expert in Oriental books to investigate its history.

Considering ‘great deals’, two stories come to mind. My copy of the *Emancipation Proclamation* was acquired at a very reasonable price, part of an obscure Hollywood Director's estate auction where I acquired two lots of miniature books. What a find and what a deal. For nominal hammer prices, I got both lots! The first was a set of 24 custom bound Shakespeare volumes housed in a pink shagreen, ivory, silver and satinwood cantilevered box. The box itself is a work of art. The second lot contained 65 books, one I sold to Bob Bradbury for twice what I paid for the entire lot! The second deal was a set of three tiny Bryce tomes beautifully bound and specially cased by Sangorski and Sutcliffe - on eBay!

Bob Bradbury brought some very special books to my attention before he retired; it was always a great pleasure to work with him. Anne Bromer and Michael Garbett have also provided many

special tomes. Currently I have an agent in London who comes up with perhaps one special book a year. Additionally, I have always enjoyed knowing the book artists and adding their lovely tomes to my collection.

As it is my intention to have examples of all types of books, my 'Holy Grails' would be a period girdle book, a chemise binding, and an incunable. My big mistake was passing on an ancient Egyptian scribes set complete with a wax template and accompanying tools. I did not understand its importance as I had only been collecting 20th century books at that time. Other books tempt me at every ABAA Book Fair and whenever I tour rare book collections with FABS or the Grolier Club. First and foremost are medieval illuminated manuscripts with miniatures. I do limit myself to 3 inches and under in this area of my collection. I love woodblocks and early printed materials, artists books and French Deco bindings. Too many books, too little time and space!

As far as advice to collectors that are relatively new to the world of miniature books, I would offer the following advice: If I had a crystal ball when I began collecting, I would have studied my subject matter in depth before acquiring so many books. I made mistakes as all collectors do. Even though the books are small, it is a large world out there and one needs to focus. If you collect antiquarian books, learn how to research book history and you will save yourself from your passion for collecting.

The 'Rare Book School' at University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, is my favorite source of information about books. I have attended classes over many years and have always come back with a rewarding experience. The classes are weeklong intensive workshops taught by the top academics and rare book curators in the world. The classes are limited to 10 students, and you will find yourself sitting next to PhD's, curators, collectors and rare book sellers. My husband's class was taught by Mark Dimunition, head of Rare Books at the Library of Congress. Generally, five or six classes are taught the same week and you will be surrounded from 'morning till night' with seriously bookish people. But the best thing about 'Rare Book School' is the network of experts and fellowship you will be exposed to, [Rarebookschool.org](http://Rarebookschool.org).

I hope you have enjoyed this visit with my miniature books and me. If you have any questions or comments I would like to hear from you. ☺

*Editor's Note: Pat, thanks for a great insight to you and your collection.*

Contact information: [pistner@me.com](mailto:pistner@me.com)

## **BOOKSHELVES, Washington University Olin Library, St. Louis, Mo: Reported Jim Brogan**

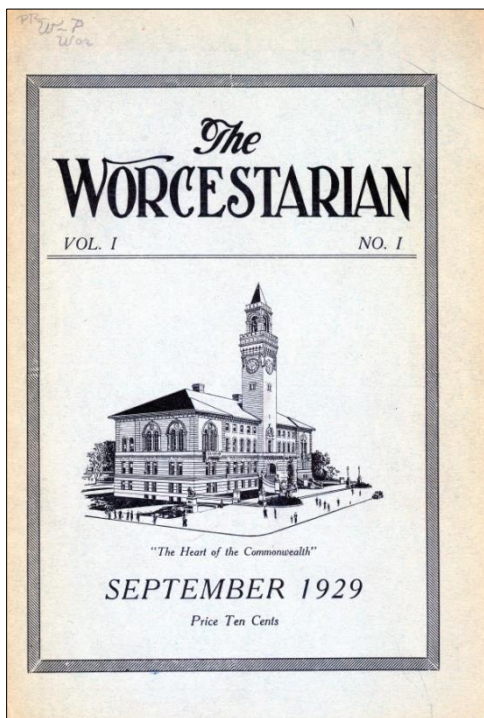
This is somewhat of a departure from our regular 'visitor reporting' in that, we have not made the trip yet but it is certainly on our list of locations to visit. Of particular interest is the Special Collections Department Washington University Library which has recently received a substantial portion of Julian and Hope Edison's collection of miniature books including an endowment supporting the collection, exhibit space, and future acquisitions. For more details, provided by a library publication, please visit the site: [www.library.wustl.edu/offtheshelf/pdf/2012fall.pdf](http://www.library.wustl.edu/offtheshelf/pdf/2012fall.pdf). 'Stay tuned' for more information. ☺

# IS THIS THE BEGINNING?

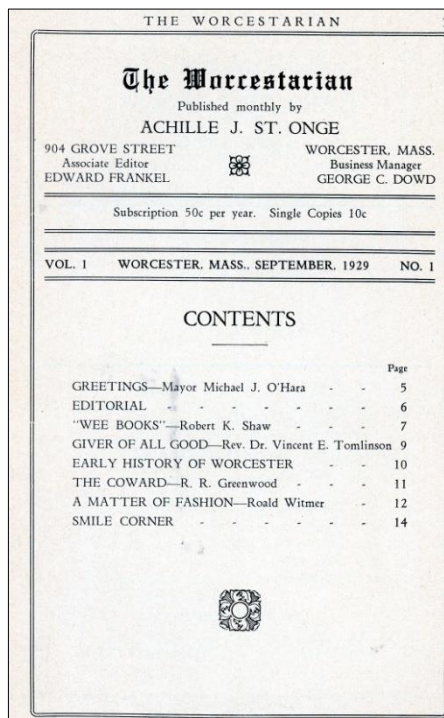
By Jim Brogan

We all know that Achille J. St. Onge was a ‘publisher extraordinaire’ of miniature books. Where did he develop his skills as a publisher, where did he start the long journey that provided him and so many others with the joy of his work? I cannot say for sure but we have before us an early example of his publishing activity. This early venture was published in 1929; St. Onge was born in 1913, so he was 16 years old at the time. Quite a feat for a young man.

Please take notice that ‘page 7’ of the publication references an article by Robert K. Shaw, this is in fact the man who wrote the text for the first miniature book that St. Onge published, *Noel*, in 1935. St. Onge was always a personable man, so I can only image that he walked into Shaw’s office at the Worcester Library and proceeded to explain what he was interested in and asked Shaw for a few ideas.



*Image, courtesy of  
The Worcester Historical Museum,  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
R. Christensen, Librarian*



*Image, courtesy of  
The Worcester Historical Museum,  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
R. Christensen, Librarian*

I have also included a copy of the ‘editorial’ page created by St. Onge for this Volume 1, Issue 1. Again, certainly an in depth view for a young man of sixteen.



## Editorial

If one would attempt but a superficial insight into the early life of man he would surely discover a great many facts concerning the foundation of our present civilization. The primitive tools, used on age-worn rocks, he will find, are a good example of man's strides toward self-accommodation and thus self-complacence, which in reality he hasn't even now been able to attain and which he will never reach, save approach and that from a distance, for there is always a multitude of inventions to be exposed to the naked eye, always darkness to be lighted. In other words, the farther we go, the fuller we realize the infinity of the unknown, and, afresh, proceed on our quest to satisfy our endless aspirations.

The historic records show us that mankind is a child of centuries. In every generation he enjoyed his role as master in disentangling the complex and oftentimes misleading threads which prevented him from anticipating clearly everything that is comprehended by us as knowledge. Whenever new light was thrown upon the dim rocks of ages, however its significance, the world, as today, was startled, pro tempore, and then the discovery was shelved away into the annals of history. Yet in spite of this in mind, in spite that every epoch had its incalculable share in contributing to the upbuilding of civilization, we seemingly feel a greater pride in our existence than our laborious predecessors. Not so much do we appreciate the glorious spot we inhabit as the transitional period of its existence. And, indeed, we are fortunate.

Of course, it will not cause us to be egotistic in our fortune. We shall not halt the progress of mankind to eat the fruits of ancestral creations. It would be utterly selfish, unmanly, and decidedly insequent. We must bear on the banner. Little dots on the map shall be bound to turn to bigger ones in the process of time, the press, too, in its proper turn will grow even faster as we shall look in consternation. The branches of the latter will undoubtedly expand but they need an amply provided beginning. Everyone of them will have its specific aim, and let this publication be one of them.

It is ushered into existence to satisfy the urgent needs of a literary mouthpiece and particularly be within the reach of its locality. On the other hand, its primary purpose will be neither political, nor will it confine itself only to matters local, but it will act as a stimulus for appreciation of literature and reading matter in general. With this torch in hand the *Worcestarian* will endeavor to serve its readers to the best of its ability, and likewise in its own way march on to progress and—which Worcester at all times well represented and maintained.

The following editorial is reprinted from Volume 1, Issue 1, of *The Worcestarian*, September 1929, Achille J. St. Onge, Publisher. Certainly, an interesting piece of writing, it looks as if the business plan has been completed and the foundation has been laid, "it will act as a stimulus for appreciation of literature and reading matter in general." I invite your comments and thoughts on this editorial and insight into the world of Achille J. St. Onge. Is this how St. Onge proceeded with his publishing of miniature books? Does this echo his disciplines for the creation of *The Miniature Book Collector*? We will certainly revisit the words of this editorial over the next year as we are able to shine new light on the dim rocks of ages and the little dots on the map shall hopefully turn to bigger ones with the progression of time. 📖

*Image, courtesy of  
The Worcester Historical Museum,  
Worcester, Massachusetts  
R. Christensen, Librarian*

## “WEE BOOKS”:

Reported by Jim Brogan

*Editor's Note: The following article is in fact the article that was written and included in the initial publication of 'The Worcesterian', Volume 1, Issue 1, September 1929. Robert K. Shaw was an accomplished microbibliophile in 1929 with a presentable collection of miniature books and the Librarian of the Worcester Public Library. The article is reprinted with the permission of the Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, R. Christensen, Librarian*

### “Wee Books”

By ROBERT K. SHAW

Extremes of any kind naturally interest people: giants and dwarfs, elephants and ants, palaces and bungalows all have their respective charms. The great Daniel Webster demanded size as well as quality in his enlarged family circle at Marshfield: bulls and butlers, maids and mattocks; plows and plowmen, must be big and bouncing as well as efficient, to satisfy the master.

Here at the Public Library, on the other hand, although we have owned for many years a folio of Napoleon's Survey of Egypt, measuring three feet, seven inches, by two feet, four inches; David Roberts' Travels in the Holy Land in six volumes, weighing one hundred and thirty-two pounds; and seven volumes of Hume's History of England weighing one hundred and ninety-six pounds by actual test on the scales, we have paid more attention, on the whole, to our dwarfs than our giants, our so-called Doll, Thumb or Miniature Library being more or less familiar to many readers of the Worcesterian.

Starting many years ago, under Mr. Green's incumbency, with the "Oxford Thumb Library" of nine volumes, measuring  $2\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1\frac{7}{8}''$ , this collection now numbers thirty-eight pieces, including a few duplicates, and all comprised in a proper black-walnut case,  $11'' \times 7''$  with folding doors. On principle, doors of any kind are deemed unfriendly toward library books, but the Doll Library, of course, is an exception to all rules, and the sudden opening of the twin portals, upon the four shelves of tiny tomes, in their cheerful red, blue, green and yellow bindings creates a pleasant surprise for the onlooker.

The "Oxford Thumb Library" just mentioned, numbers such safe and sober titles as "Pilgrim's Progress", "Imitation of Christ", "The Christian Year", "Hymns Ancient and Modern", with the "Complete Angler" thrown in so as not to make it all seem too serious. All these books are printed out in full, in good type, with neat full leather bindings and may be read easily without a glass.

The gem of the collection, let it be said for those who care to read no further, is also the smallest of all, at  $1'' \times \frac{5}{8}''$ , and comprises a letter from the famous Galileo to the Grand Duchess Christina of Sweden, mother-in-law of one of the petty Italian princelings of the 17th century, in which the great physicist seeks to reconcile science and religion. At the beginning of the 17th century (1615 being the year when the letter was written) this was no mere academic speculation, to be argued by dilettantes over their wine-glasses, but almost a matter of life and death, as the church was very determined not to forego her prerogatives as sole arbiter in such essential matters.



## “WEE BOOKS”, continued

Not only is this little Jumbo important as being intensely human, and intensively small, but it is also a true book, being set up and printed from type in its present form, and not reduced by photography, as is the case with most of these tiniest specimens, such as “Bryce’s English Dictionary” 1”x1¼” and a Bible, New Testament and Koran of about the same dimensions.

Printed from the same type as the Galileo are two other Italian texts from Padua, namely Manzoni’s “Betrothed” and Dante’s “Divine Comedy”. The former amply deserves the high reputation it has enjoyed for 100 years both in and out of Italy, presenting a graphic story of peasant and religious life of 300 years ago. This is not strictly a miniature, measuring 3”x2” and comprising nearly 1100 pages. Its great length of course precludes it from being put out as a “doll’s book” in one volume. Arriving in Worcester several years ago in a paper cover, after the fashion of the European presses, this book followed the binding of the Divine Comedy, which in full brown levant morocco, has been skilfully imitated by our local binder, on the Manzoni text.

No period or nationality has any monopoly on these Lilliputian products of the press, one of our latest acquisitions being a Japanese “accordion” Prayer-book which we now keep in a little blue leather case, custom-made for this purpose, and measuring 3½”x1¼”. It comprises eighteen double accordion pleats, with one interesting engraving which readers of the Worcesterian are respectfully invited to interpret.

While in England six years ago, the Librarian made a few notable additions to this library, comprising two rather scarce “London Almanacs” of 1788 and 1801, a “History of England” with quaint engravings of all the sovereigns from William the Conqueror to Victoria; “Le Petit Paroissien” a kind of abbreviated missal for children and “The Language and Sentiment of Flowers” a practical little reference book frequently in use.

“Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius” of dimensions 3¾”x 2” would probably be considered as a “folio” of this class, and is mentioned here as one of a series of Greek and Latin texts, some, like the specimen under review, in miniature, exquisitely printed, and published about 100 years ago, by William Pickering of London.

“Thumb-Bibles”, about 1½” square, are very common, and are not true Bibles at all, being simply collections of texts or “gems” from the Old and New Testaments. Much the same may be said for countless minuscules issued about 100 years ago entitled: “History of the Bibles”.

“Keep your merchants’ receipts” is a good motto for all supporters of “The Worcesterian”, but perhaps somewhat overdone by us in retaining, as a part of our collection, a reputed receipt for a leg of spring lamb from a Babylonian butcher shop of 3600 B. C. Such at least is the legend at-

*Continued on next page...*



## “WEE BOOKS”, continued

tached to an innocuous clay tablet, about 1" square, well baked, and exchanged for \$5.00 with a well-known archaeologist, who vouches for its authenticity, if not for the precise date.

This last being perhaps our greatest “marvel” may well bring the present little essay to a close, noting as postscripts two unrelated facts: 1st, although photographic reductions are strictly mechanical, illegible without a glass, and so comparatively uninteresting, one Bible text should be noted as a study in compressibility, the whole sixty-six books of Sacred Writ being condensed into an area of 2"x1½"x1½"; 2d, if you want to know all there is about books in miniature, call up the polite and intelligent James D.D Henderson, 55 Greene St., Brookline, who has the best collection in the universe; publishes an entertaining magazine called the “Newsletter of the LXIVMOS”, and who has undoubtedly forgotten, during the past six months, more about these fairy books, than will ever lodge in the cranium of

Yours faithfully

ROBERT K. SHAW,

Librarian.

A humble man for sure. 📖

## MY FRIEND ARCHIE:

By Bob Massmann

*Editor's Note: Bob Massmann knew Achille J. St. Onge for a number of years, having been introduced to 'Archie', by a mutual friend Haddon Klingberg. While Massmann was the Director of the Library Services, at the Central Connecticut State College, he had an idea about publishing a miniature book to commemorate a new library at the school. He approached St. Onge with the idea, and St. Onge convinced Massmann to publish the book himself. The title of that book was 'Elihu Burritt, As Much A Brother'. Over the years, Massmann and St. Onge visited, exchanged ideas, and told stories. Bob has graciously agreed to share some of those stories with our readers.*

The first two short stories are about *Noel, Christmas Echoes Down the Ages*:

Completing the binding for *Noel, Christmas Echoes Down the Ages* was running a bit late and not according to St. Onge's schedule, no doubt to have it ready for sale during the Christmas season. He went to visit the binder, Wetherbee & Company, in Worcester. There was some sort of problem in being able to complete the gilt edge treatment. St. Onge also wanted to give his wife, Margaret a copy of the book as a gift. So as to not disappoint St. Onge, the binder completed 'Copy Number 1' with a 'speckled' edge treatment rather than the gilt, a unique book for sure.

On another visit to 'Archie's house' Massmann recalled that a woman called on the telephone to say that her copy of *Noel* was not numbered, to which St. Onge replied, 'Well bring the book over and I will number it for you.'

Bob promises that there are more stories to follow....📖

## NOTES ON MINIATURE BOOKS: Reported by Jim Brogan

*Editor's Note: The following article is another example of the early writings of Achille J. St. Onge. This was originally published in the December 1938 issue of the 'Book Collector's Packet', Volume 3, Issue Number 4, page 6-7.*

Notes on Miniature Books  
By Achille J. St. Onge

*Prize little things, nor think it ill  
That men small things preserve.  
Abraham Cowley*

The preparation of an article on the subject of miniature books would involve an exhaustive examination of all records of fifteenth century printed books. The purpose of this article is to set forth a few notes in a preliminary way, in the hope that they may stimulate interest in the collecting of miniature books.

Interest in comparably small things is a well-nigh universal human trait, just as the dramatic instinct is born within us.

All down the ages, tiny volumes have appeared, each having its purpose and each expressing an interesting epoch in the history of the Book. Long before the invention of printing, lovers of the unusual and beautiful employed scribes and illuminators to make for them miniature volumes which were so small as to be easily carried on the person. The Bedouin had his 2-inch Koran; Ann Boleyn had her priceless 'Gold Book' measuring 1  $\frac{7}{8}$  inches by 1  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches in size.

The early small manuscript books were religious, Book of Hours, etc. Most of these are well under four inches in height, which has been quite generally accepted as the limit for miniature books.

Miniature books fall in two classes, those with very small letters corresponding to the smallness of the page, and those with comparatively large letters so that ordinarily a reading glass is not required in their use.

Miniature books are of various kinds—manuscript, printed, engraved or produced by lithography or photography. The so-called printed books are produced from type or plates or a combination of both. The earliest known miniature book printed in this country was 'The History of the New Testament'. It was published in Boston in 1766 by the firm of Mein & Fleming. The little book measures 1  $\frac{3}{8}$  by 2 inches.

The chief source of supply for miniature books was the publishing house of David Bryce & Sons in Scotland. This firm chose their titles carefully, and their good taste in doing so resulted in some of the titles selling as many as 100,000 copies.

Sometime a book giving exhaustive account of tiny books may be written. It should have as a part a bibliography with thousands of titles. In discussing a subject so minutely vast, an extensive treatise is called for. In my opinion, the man best qualified for this task is James D. Henderson whose collection, of miniature books, is perhaps the largest in the world. In 1936 I had announced the publication of Books in Miniature by James D. Henderson. So much time was required to prepare the manuscript, that I suggested to Mr. Henderson that we publish one of the chapters as a prelude to the announced book. The chapter chosen was on small newspapers. As would be expected, there were many items that Mr. Henderson had omitted, and which were included when we knew they existed. The final result was the book titled 'Lilliputian Newspapers' by James D Henderson, with a forward by Robert W. G. Vail, Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society. It is the first book ever published on the subject of miniature newspapers.

Many small books have been produced in this country. To write about them all would be difficult and would occupy too much space in the PACKET. Therefore, let me mention a few well-known miniatures and how they came to be published.

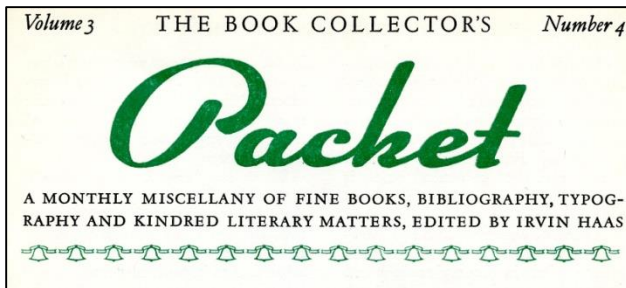
In 1900 Mr. Charles Hardy Meigs produced a book which was then claimed as the smallest printed book in the world. It was the fourth version of the Fitzgerald 'Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam' and really a most noteworthy achievement. It was 6/16 by 5/16 inches over all.

Worcester, Massachusetts was the 18th century American headquarters for small books, for it was here that Isaiah Thomas, Worcester printer, publisher, founder of the American Antiquarian Society, had worked. He printed many books. The city of Worcester is now repeating this record for the twentieth century.

Eben Francis Thompson of Worcester approached Mr. Hamilton B. Wood of the Commonwealth Press of that city and suggested to him that he undertake the printing of Mr. Thompson's version of the 'Rose Garden of Omar Khayyam' in a size that would make the book the smallest in the world. The work was laborious and very tedious. But it was successful, the pages and the letters being so much smaller than the printed verse that the entire Rose Garden could be covered by an ordinary United States postage stamp twice over. The work was done on an ordinary printing press with real ink and paper and is not a photographic reproduction as some have imagined. The little volume is so small that twenty-four of them can be placed in an ordinary sewing thimble.

William Pickering published the Diamond Classics from 1820-1831. The Shakespeare in nine volumes was the greatest work of Pickering printed from the Diamond type.

The Kingsport Press miniatures are well-known. Three of them were made by students of the Training Department of the Kingsport Press. The books are 5/8" by 7/8" in size and contain an average of 128 pages each. The three books are Lincoln, Washington, and Coolidge. The books were made for exhibition and not for sale.

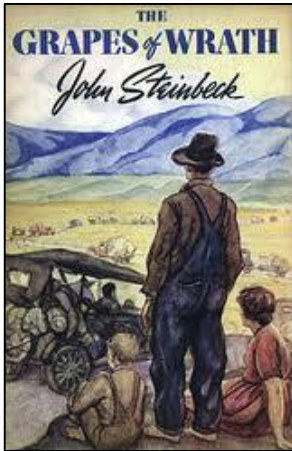


*Masthead December 1938*

The *Book Collector's Packet* was an early periodical, published monthly, over a period of several years, mostly in the early 1930's but with some volumes extending into the mid 1940's. For the most part it dealt with fine printing subjects and literary matters. This early piece by St. Onge was a unique introduction at the time. The article seems to have been editorially 'shortened', in particular with the closing paragraph. If you can help me fill in the pieces about this article, I and all of our readers will certainly appreciate it. 📖

## ABOUT JOHN STEINBECK:

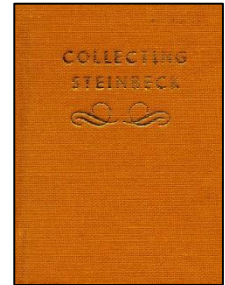
By Robert F. Orr Hanson



dust jacket image from the first edition, 1939, design by Elmer Hader

Since 1983, I have published seven books about the great American writer, John Steinbeck, (1902 – 1968) author of *The Grapes of Wrath*, for which he won The National book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. Three of my works were miniature books, while the other four were full-size studies. This article will highlight only the three tiny tomes: *Collecting Steinbeck*, *132 Central Avenue*, and *John Steinbeck: Two Essays*.

The first book, *Collecting Steinbeck* was published in 1983, it was written by Maurice Dunbar, who was a professor of English in Los Altos Hills, California. He was also the author of two full size books about book collecting in general. This informative little book measured 2 7/8" x 2 1/2" wide and was bound in a golden yellow cloth with gilt title and swirl decoration on the front cover. End papers were in a swirl pattern of yellow and gold. The frontispiece carried a tipped-in black and white photograph of John Steinbeck



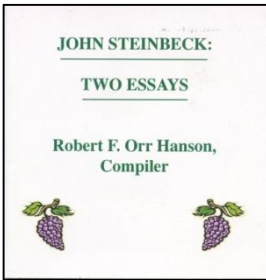
standing against a floral covered wall. A further treat was a tipped-in reproduction of Steinbeck's "Pigasus"—his spoof caricature of the Greek Flying Horse! There were 61 pages in this signed and number edition of 250 copies published when we lived in Venice, Florida. The contents in this minim discussed categories of Steinbeck's work such as: holograph material, galley proofs, first trade editions, limited editions, reprint editions, special editions, book club editions, anthologies, pirated books, paperbacks, condensed books, foreign editions, critical works, biographies and ephemera. After all these years the little gem is out-of-print.



'132 Central Avenue', picture by Helen Hanson

Following an early 1980's tour of Steinbeck country (Salinas, Carmel, Pacific Grove, and Monterey) Helen and I visited John Steinbeck's birthplace and boyhood home in Salinas. Subsequently, in 1985, I wrote and published *132 Central Avenue* which described the 15-room, gabled and turreted, frame Victorian-style house where JS was born on February 27, 1902. In 1973, a volunteer group of civic-minded women, with a common interest in gourmet cooking purchased the house and began to serve gourmet luncheons five days a week. Additionally, guided tours of the house are also conducted.

The third miniature book, published by Opuscula Press about John Steinbeck, was printed at Albuquerque in 2007. I compiled the book and dedicated it to Helen Marie Hanson (1938-2001), my beloved wife, teacher and best friend. The title of this tiny tome was *John Steinbeck: Two Essays*. It measured 2 3/4" high x 2 5/8" wide, contained 28 pages and the frontispiece carried a reproduction of the USA 15 cent commemorative



postage stamp bearing the black & white image of John Steinbeck. Bound in white card stock, the front and back inside covers show the titles of eight Steinbeck books. The outside front cover lists the book's title and compiler's name. In addition, both covers are graced by bunches of grapes in green and purple—an artistic bit of whimsy, if you like.

The contents included “First Words”—an Introduction, “Steinbeck’s Bitter/Sweet Holidays in Japan” by K. Nakayama and “Controversy and Steinbeck” by Carleton A Sheffield.

Essay one is a poignant recollection of

Steinbeck’s visit, from August 31 to September 10, 1957, as a guest of the 29<sup>th</sup> International P.E.N. congress, in Tokyo. Unfortunately, the author suffered from the flu for part of his time in the city.

The second essay/book review is by Steinbeck’s Stanford University roommate and long-time friend. The essayist went on to discuss the published (1984) 1,100 page biography of JS, *The True Adventures of John Steinbeck, Writer* by Jackson Benson.

Finally, included is a black & white unpublished picture of John Steinbeck sent to me in 1985 by Mrs. Elaine Steinbeck, and I share that with you today.



**There you have it!**



Contact information: **NEW ADDRESS** Robert F. Orr Hanson, 10270 Commonwealth St. #4334, Lone Tree, CO, 80124

## **PAPER MAKING, A VERY BRIEF & INCOMPETE HISTORY: By Peter Thomas**

In his interesting article in the November issue of *The Microbibliophile*, Randy Asplund described a time in European history when all books were written by hand on materials that are made by stretching and scraping either cow, goat or sheep skin until it is very thin and a suitable surface to write on. This material is commonly called parchment (from pergamon or goat), vellum (from veal), and sheepskins (from sheep), and in this article, regardless of origin, I will refer to it as parchment.

The process of making paper by hand is credited to have been invented in China, about 100 AD, although continuing research indicates the date could have been earlier. The secret of papermaking was carried along the “silk trade route” to northern Africa sometime after 1000 AD and it is said that the first paper made on the European Continent was made in Spain in the mid 1200’s. At this time there were many scriptoriums involved in the production of books for religious purposes. Most of these books were written on parchment, though there are examples of books written on paper, the use of paper was discouraged by the Church, as they had a huge



investment in the cattle industry for their parchment, though during much of that time, documents were not legally binding unless written on parchment.

Most books made in the early 15th century were written by hand on parchment. Some were printed, usually using carved wooden blocks, and because the goal was to make these books look like the hand written manuscript books they were usually printed on parchment. It was the invention of movable metal type, credited to Gutenberg around 1450, that changed things. With a printing press and movable type, books could be produced much faster and cheaper than before, but the metal type, cast in lead, being softer than the wood, could only make a limited number of impressions in parchment before ‘the type’ wore out. Paper on the other hand was quite soft in comparison and hundreds more impressions could be made before the type wore out. So after 1450 more and more books began to be made on paper rather than parchment. Printers would still use parchment, but would reserve it for the ‘special’ or ‘deluxe’ copies of the edition.

Paper was made by hand until around 1800 when a machine for making paper was invented. At this time the raw material for making paper was old rags. The ‘rag man’ would collect old scraps from homes and sell them to the mills. As production increased, driven by the papermaking machine’s ability to make more faster, the volume of printed material increased, especially the printing of newspapers. This increased demand surpassed the ability of people to wear out their clothes and papermakers could see a crisis was looming. This led to the search for another raw material, wood was found suitable and plentiful, and the production of paper made from wood pulp began around 1870. For several reasons (overcome in the late 20th century) this wood pulp paper was not as archival as paper made from old rags. Without care in production of the pulp the resulting paper could turn brittle and yellow. So it came to pass that cheaper books were usually made from wood pulp paper, while books made to last or as works of artistic printing were usually were made using handmade rag paper.

This tradition continues today. Many fine press printers will only use handmade paper for their production. Some presses will make regular copies on commercial wood pulp paper, and special copies on handmade paper. I know of several presses that have made their own paper for their miniature books. Off the top of my head, I can think of Ash Ranch, the Indiana Kid, Jim Yarnell and ourselves, but I would like to work to create a complete list. Perhaps readers of *The Microbibliophile* can help me out. 📖

*Editor’s Note: Peter and his wife Donna are miniature book artists, creators, and publishers residing in Santa Cruz, CA,*

*Contact information: E-mail: [peteranddonna@cruzio.com](mailto:peteranddonna@cruzio.com), Blog: [www.wanderingbookartists.blogspot.com/](http://www.wanderingbookartists.blogspot.com/)*

## **RESTING PLACES and SIGHTSEEING:**

**By Michael Garbett**


You are probably familiar with the love story of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, (1806 – 1861). How she knew that her strong-minded father objected to her liaison with the poet Robert Browning, (1812 – 1885) and how the couple married, in secret, in 1846 and ran away to Italy.

They settled in Florence where they lived and worked until she died in 1861. They were happy there and she is buried in a tomb designed by Lord Leighton and situated not far from her favourite Boboli Gardens. Robert died twenty-five years later and various difficulties prevented his being buried in Florence. Instead, he is interred at Poet’s Corner, Westminster Abbey.



While they were living in Italy Elizabeth produced *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, probably the best known of her works. There was a publisher on the Piazza San Marco, in Venice called Rosen. With an eye to the tourist trade, he published several foreign language titles in miniature editions. They are bound in cream coloured boards, printed in red and black and secured with leather ties. Among them was *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, published in 1906. It has a portrait frontis, 104 pages and an engraving of EBB's tomb.

When I was in Florence earlier this year, and after I had revisited the usual tourist high spots, the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, the Uffizi and Santa Croce, I decided to search out Elizabeth's grave, and I am so glad that I did. The thought strikes me that it might be an interesting project to locate the resting places of other writers whose works have been published in miniature form. Shakespeare is too easy. I can drive to Stratford upon Avon in about an hour as long as I can make it through the tourists. What about Edward Fitzgerald, the translator of *The Rubaiyat*. He is buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's Church, Boulge Suffolk, where a rose tree from a clipping of one that grew on Omar Khayyam's tomb, grows at the foot of his grave. Then there is Alexander Pope, the translator of Homer's Iliad. He is buried in St. Mary's Church, Twickenham, where his monument bears the inscription 'To one who would not be buried in Westminster Abbey.' Pope is reputed to haunt the church, following the exhumation of his skull, which was purchased for phrenological examination.

This could prove to be a very interesting project. I think I will search out a few more, but not until I have finished the final chapter of the book I am reading. *Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel. 

Contact information: 1 Over Court Mews Lane, Almondsbury, S. Glos. BS32 4DG, England, E-mail: garbett469@btinternet.com, [www.mgbooks.co.uk](http://www.mgbooks.co.uk).

## **BOOK CURSES, THE CHALLENGE OF KEEPING A BOOK ON THE OWNERS SHELF: By Margaret Challenger and Jim Brogan**

We have learned the great amount of work required to produce a book in medieval times from reading Randy Asplund's article in the current issue of *The Microbibliophile*. Making the tools, treating the skins, preliminary writing and final text, the illuminations, etc., would take months, maybe even years of work.

Books were very valuable, not available to the common man. The most effective method to deter a bibliomaniac from 'borrowing' or stealing such a valuable item was the 'Book Curse'. This was a security system of social consequences, to frighten the person on a spiritual level, a damnation of his soul. We have seen that books were chained to their shelves, but also shelves empty of the chained books; physically restrained from the thief, but available to the owner with the key. It pre-dated Christianity, the book curse, was a universal method to secure such a valuable item. The wrath of gods such as Thoth, Ashur, and Belit were promised in early civilizations, where the love of a god was paramount.

The colophon was the usual location of these curses and in some cases; they were able to use a wide margin on an individual page to pen the curse. Book curses used threats of several different types of punishment to invoke fear among those who would take or damage a book:

bodily injury, damnation, excommunication, or anathema were the most common threats. The following ‘book curse’ would make you think twice about taking and not returning a book:

*‘For him that stealeth, or borroweth and returneth not, this book from its owner, let it change into a serpent in his hand and rend him. Let him be struck with palsy, and all his members blasted. Let him languish in pain crying out for mercy, & let there be no surcease to his agony till he sing in dissolution. Let bookworms gnaw his entrails when at last he goeth to his final punishment, let the flames of Hell consume him forever’.*

Basbanes, Nicholas A. *A Gentle Madness: Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books*. New York: Henry Holt & Co, 1995

After the coming of movable type, paper instead of parchment, values changed with the generally great availability of printed books. However, the need to remind borrowers from where the book was lent from still existed. Hence, the origin and use of bookplates, the term Ex-Libris, is one that is familiar to every book collector, a Latin phrase, meaning literally, "from the books". It is often used to indicate ownership of a book, as in ‘*from the books of...*’ or ‘*from the library of...*’.

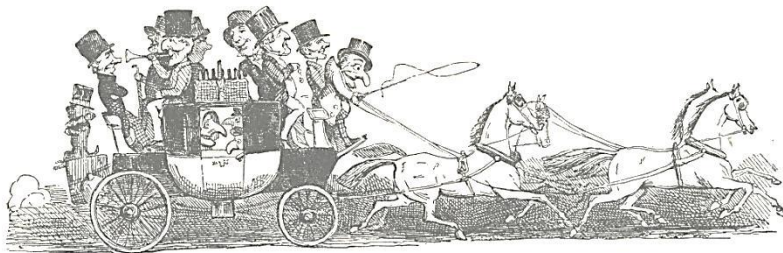
However, collectors of books, at least for the last few hundred years or more, have used bookplates – ex-libris – a printed slip of paper placed inside the front cover, in place of a curse, and for the benefit of the owner of the book, not the writer or publisher. The first of these were printed by utilizing elaborate woodblocks, in the 1520’s. This became another collectable art form, designed and printed to the personal need of owners, and also for libraries.

Hopefully this article is just the dash of information to give you some room to think about the subject. Miniatures need tiny bookplates – a great way to personalize your collection! How many of our readers use bookplates today? Please let the editor know, as it would be another interesting subject to visit and share information about. 📖

Contact Information: Margaret Challenger, 770 Downview Crescent, Oshawa L1H – 7W3, Ontario, Canada, E-mail: [tmarg@bell.net](mailto:tmarg@bell.net)

## NEW BOOK SHOP:

When in Paris, stop at the new miniature book shop, the proprietors are C & K Okuyama, MBS members, and one of the winners of the MBS Distinguished Book Award for 2011. The shop name is *MiniMa*, the address is: 5, rue de l'Echaudé 75006 Paris. C & K invite everyone to visit them when you are in Paris. 📖



Paris 12 km. →

## **MINIATURE BOOK SOCIETY: Traveling Exhibit Location Information**

The Miniature Book Society has an outstanding traveling miniature book exhibit that is available for display at your local library, school, or organization. You can get a sneak preview of the display by visiting the MBS website: [www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org). If you would like to learn about hosting the exhibit, please contact Jim Brogan, E-mail: [jbrogan1@verizon.net](mailto:jbrogan1@verizon.net).

**March – May 2013**, Museum of the Southwest, 1705 West Missouri Avenue, Midland, TX, [www.museumsw.org](http://www.museumsw.org)

Check the MBS website [www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org) for additional exhibit information. Remember that the exhibit can be shared with your favorite school or library. The purpose of the exhibit is to provide people with access to the world of miniature books. You can never tell when a new connoisseur will become interested in miniature books and what may spark that interest. The exhibit is just such a visual torch that it may light the pathway for someone. Stop at your library, call your alma mater, or speak with the librarian or the person who is in charge of library exhibits, the MBS wants to share their traveling exhibit with everyone. 📖

## **CATALOGUES RECEIVED:**

**Karen Nyman Book Seller**, Catalogue #41, 104 items offered, many color images, a wonderful selection of fine miniature books including: ‘books about books’, and ‘many wonderful books from the great old press names’, distributed via e-mail, hard copy available upon request, 702 Rosecrans Street, San Diego, CA 92106-3013, E-mail: [karennyman2@cox.net](mailto:karennyman2@cox.net)



**Tracy Bradbury Miniature Books**, Catalogue #63, 16 pages, 191 miniature book items offered, including 13 additional reference books, black-and-white presentation with several fine images, excellent service, Brooklyn, NY, E-mail: [bradburyminibooks@gmail.com](mailto:bradburyminibooks@gmail.com)

**Oak Knoll Books**, Winter 2012 a full-color catalog Number 300, 152 pages, 271 offerings, an excellent full color catalog loaded with color illustrations, books about books, available as a ‘full’ download PDF, New Castle, DE, [www.oakknoll.com](http://www.oakknoll.com)

**Bromer Booksellers**, E-Catalogue 31, many excellent offerings including 6 not so common miniatures all with excellent descriptions and photographic representations. Contact information; telephone: 617.247.2818, 607 Boylston Street, Boston, MA, [www.bromer.com](http://www.bromer.com)

**The Kelmescott Bookshop, Rare Books**, Catalogue 8, including artists’ Books, Private Press, many subjects and offerings, 34 West 25<sup>th</sup> St. Baltimore, MD, 21218, [www.kelmescottbookshop.com](http://www.kelmescottbookshop.com)

These catalogues are your best friends, call or write for a copy and make a new friend. 📖

## TERMS and DEFINITIONS:

By Jim Brogan

The new word for me this month is **GAUFFERED**, or gauffed. A day without learning something new is a boring day. This term is used to describe the gilt or silvered edges of a book that have been decorated by the impression of heated 'tools'.



*Photo example of a gauffered edge, courtesy of Pat Pistner.*

As one thing leads to another, **POINTELLÉ**, refers to the 'gold-tooled decoration' on leather bindings producing a dotted effect, whether by the repetition of single dots or by the use of tools with dotted instead of solid outlines'.

Some reference materials that will guide you in the usage of such terms are:

- *The Chicago Manual of Style*,  
The University of Chicago Press, 16th Edition, 2010
- *The Publication Manual of the American Publication Association*,  
The American Publication Association, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009
- *ABC For Book Collectors*,  
Oak Knoll Press, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2006, John Carter and Nicolas Barker

The good thing about miniature books is that you can never say you have seen or heard about everything. I hope that you have enjoyed this short lesson on terms and definitions. 📖



## DID YOU KNOW:

By Jim Brogan


The Charles Dickens Museum, in London, has been re-opened after a long and expensive renovation to return the residence to its condition as when Dickens lived there. It was here where 'Oliver Twist' and 'Nicholas Nickleby' were written. Dickens and his family lived at 48 Doughty Street between 1837 and 1839; this is the only one of his various London homes to survive today. 📖

***“Oh, I need to renew my MB subscription and send in my Conclave Registration Form for Vancouver...”***

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED:

*Book Source Magazine*, January /February 2013, Volume 29, Issue Number 2, great small format magazine with all sorts of 'book news' including many articles as well as information about auctions, libraries, book care, etc. Also, an interesting editorial about the changes to their magazine sections and information to be reported. Contact information: Book Source Magazine, PO Box 567, Cazenovia, NY, 13035, E-mail: [bsm@windstream.net](mailto:bsm@windstream.net), [www.booksourcemagazine.com](http://www.booksourcemagazine.com)

*Fine Books and Collections Magazine*, Autumn 2012, Issue 10.4, A large format, full color, glossy magazine devoted to fine books, collections, and printing. Articles about the Rare Book School Director, Michael Suarez, bibliographic research, and pop-up books are some of the features included in this issue, wonderful reading. The publication also maintains an excellent 'resource guide' dealing with everything about books. Contact information: Rebecca Rego Barry, Editor, 4905 Pine Cone Drive #2, Durham, NC, 27707, E-mail: [Rebecca@finebooksmagazine.com](mailto:Rebecca@finebooksmagazine.com), [www.finebooksmagazine](http://www.finebooksmagazine)

Both of these publications are wonderful resources, who knows what you do not know. 

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Codex International Antiquarian Book Fair**, Craneway Pavilion, Richmond, CA, February 10-13, 2013, additional information: [www.codexfoundation.org](http://www.codexfoundation.org)

**46<sup>th</sup> California International Antiquarian Book Fair**, San Francisco, CA, February 15-17, 2013, additional information: [www.sfbookfair.com](http://www.sfbookfair.com)

**34<sup>th</sup> Greenwich Village Antiquarian Book Fair**, NYC, February 23-24, 2013, 490 Hudson Street, Noon till 5:00 PM, additional information: [www.gvabf.com](http://www.gvabf.com)

**PBFA Antiquarian Book Fair**, Edinburgh, Scotland, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013

**Miniature Book Society, Grand Conclave**, Vancouver, Canada, August 9- 11, additional information: [www.mbs.org](http://www.mbs.org)



*"Let's see, I can take Amtrak to Portland from NYC, then a ferry to Vancouver and there are 12 bookshops in Vancouver and ...."*

## CLASSIFIED WISH LISTS:

### Buy, Sell, or Trade

As a feature for subscribers, 'The Microbibliophile' will offer a classified listing service with each issue. Each message should be no more than 250 characters. Send your information to the Editor for inclusion in the next issue.

Neale Albert is looking for two miniature books by Asao Hoshino -- *Kwaidan* and *Ichiaku No Suna*, and for the special editions of the Asao Hoshino books. "I am thinking of doing a Hoshino bibliography", Contact information: E-mail: nma8156@yahoo.com

Katherine Bakunas is looking for the printed (original paper) copies of the early MBS Newsletters, prior to October of 1989, Contact information:  
E-mail: kkbakunas@gmail.com

Karen Nyman is looking for 3 volumes she lacks from *The Cabinet of Lilliput*, by John Harris. Here are the missing titles: *Arthur and George*, *Jacob the Fisherman*, etc., and *Julia and the Dog*, etc. Contact information:  
E-mail: karennyman2@cox.net or call 619-226-4441.

Pat Pistner is looking for 28 Raheb books (*Mudlark Miniatures* and *Littlest Library*) published in 1976 and 1977, and only 19 published through 2000  
Contact information: E-mail: Pistner@me.com

Caroline Brandt is looking for two volumes in the Daisy & Dot series by Aunt Fanny (Buffalo: Breed & Lent. 1866): *DAISY Part II and Dot*. Also *DAISY Part I*, as my copy has damage to one page of text, call 804-200-1260 or write 1500 Westbrook Ct. #1109, Richmond, VA 23227

Darleen Cordova is looking for the following *The Spirit of Gutenberg* by the Phoenix Club of Printing House Craftsmen from 1940. My 1940 boxed set of six books had 2 copies of "*Exploring the Last Frontier*" by George Meredith, Portland, instead of the Gutenberg title.  
Contact information: E-mail: c.cordova@sbcglobal.net.

Stephen Byrne is looking for a Gleniffer Press; "*3 Point Gill Titling Catalogue*".  
Contact information: E-mail: sb@finalscore.demon.co.uk

Henry Hurley is looking for miniature angling books and information about titles that he does not have. (Please see article in *The Microbibliophile*, Volume XXX, Number 4, July 2011)  
Contact information: E-mail: info@hurleybooks.com

Jim Brogan would like to find two volumes from REM publications; REM Miniatures, *A Record and A Sampler, Part IV, Sample sheets*, 'Miniature scroll with decorative wrapper and tie ribbon, 1 15/16" x 6'.  
Contact information: E-mail: Jbrogan1@verizon.net

Jim Brogan would like to find the following issues (original as printed) of *The Microbibliophile* to complete our archive: Volume 14 (#4)1990, Volume 18 (#2)1994, Volume 20 (#1, #2, #3, #4, #5)1996, Volume 21 (#1, #2, #3)1997  
Contact information: E-mail: [jbrogan1@verizon.net](mailto:jbrogan1@verizon.net)

Ellen Diamond would like to purchase the 'small printed document' titled "*It Happens To Everyone*", this was featured in *The Microbibliophile* Vol. XXX No. 2 (March 2011) p. 18  
Contact information: E-mail: eldiamond54@comcast.net





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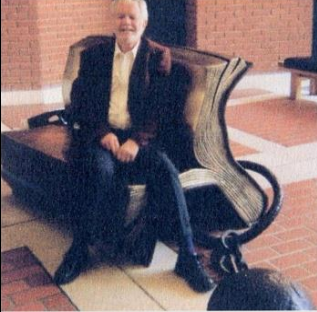


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### *The Microbibliophile Press Room*



"I'll be glad when this first day is over, I'm tired of being called an apprentice. Where is that Riley? He went for coffee an hour ago?"

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