

Syracuse University

SURFACE

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public
Affairs - Former Departments, Centers,
Institutes and Projects

Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public
Affairs

5-11-2009

Bassett Jones, The Grolier Club, and the 1932 Polar Exhibition: Two Thousand Items and Counting

David H. Stam
Syracuse University

Follow this and additional works at: https://surface.syr.edu/maxwell_other



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stam, David H., "Bassett Jones, The Grolier Club, and the 1932 Polar Exhibition: Two Thousand Items and Counting" (2009). *Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs - Former Departments, Centers, Institutes and Projects*. 8.

https://surface.syr.edu/maxwell_other/8

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs - Former Departments, Centers, Institutes and Projects by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Bassett Jones, The Grolier Club, and the 1932 Polar Exhibition:

Two Thousand Items and Counting

By David H. Stam

A Talk Delivered at a Special Dinner of the Grolier Club

May 11, 2009

Jones, Bassett. Feb. 6, 1877 to Jan. 24, 1960

When asked at the beginning of this century by the Director of the Grolier Club to develop an exhibition of polar literature based on our personal collection, my wife and I assumed that we were breaking new collecting ground for the Club's exhibition program. We learned soon enough that there were a number of distinguished members who were polar collectors, particularly John Bockstoce, Bill Priester, and Doug Wamsley, but still had no idea that the tradition antedated our efforts by almost eighty years. But last December, awaiting the opening ceremony of *'For Jean Grolier & His Friends': 125 Years of Grolier Club Exhibitions & Publications, 1884-2009* in the Grolier Exhibition Hall, Deirdre and I almost simultaneously noticed in the case covering the 1930s, a somewhat faded label announcing an exhibition on "The Literature of Polar Exploration in English."

This modest announcement provoked for us a lot of questions to which at first we found few answers. Who curated the show? How did it overlap with our own? Was it one personal collection, or were there individual lenders and institutional collaborators as well? But gradually the story emerged on what must have been a very large exhibition with a very short life of fourteen days.

During the preparation for our show, which ran from December 2005 to February 2006, we learned a great deal about other polar collections in the city, but mostly too late for inclusion in the exhibit. One was at Columbia University Library, the so-called *Libris Polaris* Collection, bought by Columbia in 1944 from the collector, Bassett Jones. After our exhibit closed, Jane Siegel of Columbia kindly invited us to see the major books of the collection, and I made a mental note to study his collection in due course. In fact it was the collection of Bassett Jones that formed the nucleus of the Grolier exhibit of 1932. Not until Bibliography Week of 2009 did I follow up with an examination of the manuscripts of the *Libris Polaris* Collection and piece together the story of the Grolier exhibition of 1932. I found it intriguing enough to want to share it with Club members.

Our exhibition in 2005-2006 was planned partly as a harbinger of the Fourth International Polar Year which took place in 2007 and 2008, a massive program of international science concentrating on climate change and involving over 50,000 scientists worldwide but focused primarily on the Polar Regions. Similarly, the Bassett Jones exhibit occurred shortly before the Second International Polar Year in 1932-33, recognizing another period of increased concentration on science in the high latitudes. The first International Polar Year in 1882 and 1883 involved twelve nations with scientific stations in the Arctic, including two US stations at Point Barrow, Alaska, and on Ellesmere Island in the far north of the Canadian archipelago. It successfully attempted to gather simultaneous meteorological and magnetic observations from throughout the circumpolar regions. The third polar year was renamed the International Geophysical Year of 1957 and 1958, and it was my own participation in that massive international collaboration that first inspired my own interest in polar exploration.

Bassett Jones was a consulting engineer who graduated from MIT in 1898 and formed a consulting partnership specializing in elevator and lighting design and installation. According to his *NYTimes* obituary, Jones “designed the first theatre floodlights in 1912 for Maude Adams and directed the lighting for her enchanting impersonation of Peter Pan.” As a businessman, his early preoccupation was with fish and fisheries; in 1926 he was President of General Sea Foods in Gloucester, Mass., before it was bought by General Foods in 1929. One account in Wikipedia claims that Marjorie Merriweather Post brought her yacht, the *Sea Cloud*, into Gloucester in 1926 and was served a luncheon meal that afterwards she learned had been frozen six months before. It took her three years to persuade General Foods to acquire General Sea Foods. As daughter of C. W. Post, inventor of Postum, Grape Nuts, and Post Toasties, she had inherited the Postum Cereal Company on her father’s death in 1914 and became enthusiastic about the prospects for the frozen food industry. So apparently was Bassett Jones until the merger with General Foods.

Not irrelevant to this polar story is the fact that General Sea Foods was founded in 1923 by Charles Birdseye, a clever fellow who had spent four years (1912 to 1916) in the Labrador fur trade. He spent many hours watching Inuit fishing and saw that fish would freeze almost immediately but retained their flavor and flakiness when thawed. He invented a Quick Freeze Machine in 1925, and somehow found Bassett Jones to run the company, but Birdseye was almost bankrupt when he sold out in 1929.

Jones was also a major collector of books, manuscripts, and ephemera dealing with the Polar Regions and a member of both the

Grolier Club and the Explorers Club.¹ He came out of retirement in the 1930s to direct the installation of the Empire State elevators in 1930, only on condition that they “do it my way.” At the same time he chaired a subcommittee of the Merchants Association which successfully recommended the end of elevator speed limits which had previously been capped at 700 feet per minute. In November 1931 he gave a talk at the American Museum of Natural History on “Fishing Banks and Fishing.” He joined the Grolier Club that year and remained a member until 1938.

At the time of the 1932 exhibition Jones was acting President of the Explorers Club. Not all of his Explorers Club activities were entirely congenial. Fiscal problems were endemic for the Club throughout the Depression, and he had to deal with some of those. That Club was house poor with a large building on Cathedral Parkway. Then in April 1933, the *NYTimes* reported that Jones was being sued for \$50,000 by a former librarian of the Explorers Club, Frederick A. Blossom, for asserting that Blossom had sold copies of the Club publication, *As Told at the Explorers Club* (New York, 1931), for his personal profit. The *Times* makes no further reference to this slander suit, but we do know that at the same time Blossom was moonlighting with work on translations and editions of Collette, Proust, and a Modern Library edition of Casanova, illustrated by Rockwell Kent.

In 1933 Jones was involved in a Columbia University study of the relationship of US debt structure to the decline in production during the

¹ The bookplate of Jones’s *Libris Polaris* is taken from a famous engraving in William Parry’s *Journal of a voyage for the discovery of a north-west passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific; performed in the years, 1819-20, in His Majesty's ships Hecla and Griper, under the orders of William Edward Parry, R.N., F.R.S.* London: John Murray, 1821. It shows Parry’s ships, the *Hecla* and the *Griper*, trussed up in their winter quarters, with a lonely wolf silhouetted in the lower left corner, howling at the stars.

depression, and in that year he published a book on the subject. Judging by some reviews, it was not universally admired. In 1935 he was spokesman for a move for secession of Nantucket from the state of Massachusetts, arguing that it could govern itself much more economically. He is credited with planning the illumination of the City of Syracuse, Riverside Church, First National Bank of Boston, and planned the lighting for the opening extravaganza of the 1939 World's Fair, complete with cosmic rays as explained in person by Albert Einstein. In 1953 he wrote a letter to the *Times* recommending that the Post Office charge first-class rates for junk mail, saying they might even operate at a profit and reduce the amount of useless mailings.

According to his *NYTimes* obituary, Jones was also a real estate operator. He loathed New York and called it “this center of organized discomfort” and spent as much time as possible at his home on Nantucket. Even so, judging by his letterheads, he seems to have had an unusual number of Manhattan domiciles. He was on Riverside Drive during the exhibition. At the time his collection was sold in 1944 he was at 1058 Park Avenue. In the 1950s he had an apartment at 325 East 70th St, but was at 200 East 66th St. at the time of his death in 1960. At that time I was living on East 64th St., and could well have passed him in the neighborhood. A lengthy obituary appeared in the *NYTimes* on January 25, 1960. All in all a fascinating and somewhat quixotic character.

Bassett Jones was involved in two exhibitions of his polar materials, the large one at the Grolier Club in early 1932 and a smaller one at the Architectural League in January 1941. Exhibit labels for both shows are included in the Bassett Jones archives at Columbia University, about 150 for the Grolier show and about 30 for the much smaller Architectural League exhibit. The Grolier Club labels include a

miniature Club logo on the lower left corner.² Notably absent from these cards, in both exhibits, were citations to the books being exhibited, so that they provide a potential polar parlor game for any enthusiast. It's easy to guess, for instance, that his presentation copy of a book about the *Belgica* given to Herbert Bridgman," with holograph notes by all the crew," was Dr. Frederick Cook's *Through the First Antarctic Night* (1909).³ Harder to intuit without a good deal of research, if then, is "A rare item, but of doubtful accuracy. BALCH."

Apparently Jones also displayed in the show whole groups of books without displaying title pages or contents. The labels suggest as much: "There is a large number of these small popularized general narratives, many of them full of errors, most of them worth little, but some of them scarce and a few rare." Another label reads "Materials on Norwegian Whaling 1930-31," just prior to the exhibit, while a third says "There is a large number of items bearing on Nansen and his work." The promises of Adolphus W. Greely, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Marie Peary Stafford, Emma de Long, and others to provide large numbers of books and objects to the exhibit implies far larger numbers of objects than the Club would consider in its present exhibition

² Subsequent to the delivery of this paper, I discovered in the archives of the American Geographical Society a number of additional Grolier Club exhibition labels from the 1932 show. One can only speculate on how they might have been placed there. They may have been for items loaned to the show by the AGS.

³ Cook's signed presentation copy to Bridgman, Secretary of the Peary Arctic Club, is now in the Columbia University Library Rare Books and Manuscript Collection as part of the Libris Polaris collection (B999 .C774). The exhibition entry is something of an exaggeration concerning this remarkable book. It contains five holograph notes and postcards to Cook from officials of the *Belgica* voyage, not all the members of the crew, but including Commander Adrian de Gerlache, Captain George Lecointe (the Executive Officer), First Mate Roald Amundsen, Polish meteorologist Henryk Arctowski, and Emile Racovitza, the Russian geologist (the latter two in German). All are cordial, almost affectionate, towards "dear Doctor Cook."

program. My own speculation is that the 1932 exhibit included both some rare items under glass but also bookcases filled with books which members were able to examine, though pictures of the exhibition hall at that time show no bookcases.

Stefansson's role was a curious one. Perhaps the most accomplished polar book collector of all time, he was first motivated by his need for information to support his own Arctic explorations and anthropological studies in that region. Stefansson by 1932 was well on his way to creating what is today the world's finest Arctic Collection, now at Dartmouth College. His collecting continued obsessively until his death in 1962, more than ten years after the gift/purchase of the collection by Dartmouth where he spent his last years as curator, teacher, and raconteur. According to their correspondence in the Bassett Jones Collection, Stefansson's role as co-curator of the exhibition was to fill in the lacunae of Jones collection so that the exhibit could be as complete as possible.

In the Jones archive there is a "List of Known Items Not Shown at Grolier Club Exhibit", as well as a "Catalogue of Items Shown at an Exhibition of the Literature of Polar Exploration in English at the Grolier Club January 28, 1932." Both were typed with manuscript annotations and apparently went unpublished. The title page notes that the show was arranged by Stefansson and Jones, with the assistance of the American Geographical Society and the Explorers Club. Crossed out in the middle of that list was the National Geographic Society, for reasons I can only guess.

On February 4, 1932, Stefansson wrote to Jones that his "books themselves are now side by side with yours at the Grolier Club" and encouraged Jones to decide there and then on which ones he wanted to buy so as to spare the inconvenience of moving them twice. Then on

February 15, shortly after the exhibit closed, Stef wrote again that “If the depression is really hard with you, we could make a real hard time deal—a little down now and the rest when convenient.” I have not found a list of Stefansson’s loans to the exhibit, but they were extensive and Stef was trying to sell them to Jones. The Stefansson archive at Dartmouth contains a list of books he sold to Bassett Jones, dated March 15, 1932, most of them included in the exhibit. The list totals \$797.50 for books selected by Jones on March 11, plus \$276 for books bought by Jones at other times.

Despite Stefansson’s apparently sincere offer of a “real hard time deal,” a month later on April 14 Stef scribbled a note to Jones asking for some payment:

April 14 1932

Dear Bassett:

Has your ship come in? Mine are getting wrecked or something and I don’t know where to borrow (all my friends are either broke or so rich I can’t ask them). Could you let me have a couple of hundred so I can get by the rest of the month?

Stef

The March 15 invoice contains a pencil annotation that \$500 was received on Apr. 21, leaving a balance of \$573.50 which we can assume Jones eventually paid off.

But Stefansson was not the only lender to the show. Adolphus W. Greely, commander of the famous and tragic Lady Franklin Bay Expedition of 1882-84, the primary American role in the first International Polar Year of 1882-83, was a major lender. Greely was something of an *eminence gris* among Polar explorers of the early

twentieth century. Jones asked him to lend books from his collection, to which Greely replied: “Certainly will help all I can in the exhibit of Polar Literature....Once I had over two thousand polar titles but they were scattered after my wife died. Much is in the N G Library. ⁴ Probably I can send you two or three hundred titles with some photos.”

Unlike our 2005 show, Jones and Stefansson included a good number of manuscripts, including Stefansson’s own manuscript diaries from his first two Arctic expeditions starting in 1906, the famous logs of George de Long concerning the *Voyage of the Jeannette*, original field notes and sketches of Robert E. Peary’s North Pole trek in 1909, and the log of the *Graf Zeppelin’s* last Arctic flight.

What surely must have been a highpoint of the exhibition was loaned by Mrs. Emma De Long, widow of the famous American explorer, George de Long, commander of the ill-fated *Jeannette* of 1879. De Long died with some of his men after his ship was frozen in and sank north of Wrangell Island off the coast of eastern Siberia. In 1883, Mrs. De Long had edited and published her husband’s diaries of *The Voyage of the Jeannette*, and it was the manuscript of those journals which she generously lent to the Club. In fact, the Grolier exhibit inspired Mrs. De Long to write in her eighties her own autobiography, as she tells in the beginning of *Explorer’s Wife* (New York, 1938):

During the winter of 1932 Vilhjalmur Stefansson asked me to lend some of the relics of the *Jeannette* Expedition, commanded by my husband, to Mr. Bassett Jones of the Explorers Club. Mr. Jones was organizing a private exhibition of Arctic books and relics at the Grolier Club of New York. I had such things aplenty, of

⁴ I recently requested permission from the National Geographic Library to see these Greely books but was told that the Library and its rare books could only be used by the NG staff, in my experience a rare example of bibliothecal uncooperativeness.

course, and gladly complied. Among those chosen were the large journal written by my husband on board the *Jeannette* up to the time of her crushing by the ice pack, the two ice journals in pencil, which faithfully recorded his fearful trip southward with his men to Siberia across the ice, and a silk flag which I had made as my contribution to the Expedition.

Her account continues:

The exhibition was a great success and brought together many people who had been concerned with the Arctic, among them Mrs. Robert E. Peary, whom I had always admired but had never before met. A few weeks later I invited about twenty of the group to my house for tea, and there the talk turned largely on an old clipping I had which told of a tattered section of chart found on Commander De Long's body.

Mr. Stefansson and the others were much interested, and more than ever when I found that I had a portion of the chart, too. My husband had carried it, rather than the full sized map, to guide him southward on the Lena Delta.

When I mentioned that I had in my cellar a trunkful of letters which dealt with those years of preparation and consummation of the *Jeannette* Expedition, Mr. Stefansson urged me to get them out and re-read them. He was confident that there was a story in them and that I ought to write it.

In due course Stefansson wrote a lengthy introduction for *Explorer's Wife*.

In addition to De Long's silk flag, other interesting realia were on exhibit, including a painting by Albert Operti of Peary's North Pole

vessel, the *SS Roosevelt*, anchored at its northernmost point at Cape Sheridan, with full colors flying (not a typical scene for ships on the ice). Marie Peary Stafford, the legendary Snow Baby, let Jones know that the signal flags had been displayed in honor of her birthday in Greenland a few years earlier. For the exhibit, her mother, Josephine Diebietch Peary, made a special trip from New Jersey to get from her lockbox in Washington Peary's chronometers for display in the exhibit. She also lent the sledge flag which Peary had taken to the Pole. Safety matches and a couple of small rocks from Amundsen's South Pole trip had been recovered by Richard Byrd and made their way into Jones's collection and were included in the exhibition.⁵ There were also the American and Explorers Club flags carried by Commander Byrd in Antarctica.

The makeshift labels for the Grolier show suggest that the exhibit was organized geographically with some general display labels such as General—Historical; Voyages; North Pole Attempts; The Franklin Search; Antarctica. And then there are specific places like Hudson Bay; Baffin Bay; Bering Strait; Spitsbergen; Ross Sea; Weddell Sea.

The formal opening on January 28, 1932, featured two distinguished speakers: Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Director of the American Geographical Society, who later became President of Johns Hopkins University, spoke on "The Scientific Aspects of Polar Exploration," and co-curator Vilhjalmur Stefansson addressed his favorite subject, "Polar Exploration and its Literature." Their connection was a close one, and we learn from the Dartmouth College Archives that Bowman helped give Stefansson a boost in his book collecting passion by recommending that the American Geographical Society give to Stef its collection of about 300 polar duplicates.

⁵ They are now in the *Libris Polaris* collection, and were described by Laurence Gould in his *Cold: the Record of an Antarctic Sledge Journey*. New York, 1931, p. 218-222.

On February 4, 1932, at 3 pm, Jones gave a tour of the exhibition followed by a “tea” party. The remarkable guest list included Mrs. Robert Peary, her nephew, Emil Diedrich, Mrs. Emma de Long, Jones’s wife and his mother, Stefansson, the legendary ice master Captain Bob Bartlett, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence [sic] Gould, Edward Brock, and Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Strong. The most obvious exclusion, one who was then living in New York and could easily have come, was Matthew Henson, Peary’s African-American assistant and companion at the North Pole. Ironically, Jones’s copy of Henson’s book, *A Negro Explorer at the North Pole* (1912), listed at \$1.50, is not now listed in the Columbia Library catalogue, although a few reprints are now in the Columbia collections.

The exhibit was on view for a surprisingly short period, from January 28 to February 10, 1932. The only coverage by the *NYTimes* was on February 9 announcing the closing the next day: it may be worth giving the article in full:

POLAR EXHIBIT NEAR CLOSE

Display of Books on Exploration

Will End Tomorrow.

Today and tomorrow are the last days on which the public will have opportunity to see the extensive exhibition of books in English on Polar exploration at the Grolier Club, 47 East Sixtieth Street, arranged by Vilhjalmur Stefansson and Bassett Jones with the cooperation of the American Geographical Society and the Explorers Club. This collection, which comprises about 2,000 volumes, is said to be one of the most complete on the subject ever brought together. Many of the books are rarities, many are autographed, and others contain autograph letters bound in.

Included in the exhibition are also pictures and relics of Polar exploration. An American flag and a flag of the Explorers Club carried by Commander Byrd over the South Pole are included, as is also Peary's sledge flag carried to the North Pole and back. The original log of the Graf Zeppelin on her Arctic trip last year is also shown.

That is all that the *Times* deemed fit to print on what must have been an amazing aggregation of polar materials. But the final word about the show can go to Stefansson, who on March 1, 1932, sent the following letter to Henry T. Peters, Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements:

Dear Mr. Peters:

I hope my being hundreds of letters behind in my general correspondence will excuse the delay in thanking you for your kind letter of February 4 written on behalf of the Committee on Arrangements of the Grolier Club.

Both Mr. Jones and I enjoyed and thought it a privilege to introduce the Club (as a club) to the literature of polar exploration.

You know perhaps that even within the Jones definition of the Arctic we could not exhibit everything we had – there were stacks of material that did not get beyond the club storerooms. It may interest you, then, that my definition of the Arctic as being the country inhabited by the Eskimos in the New World and the Eskimo-like peoples in the Old World makes the field so much wider that on my classification the number of items would have been increased by 50% if not doubled. It is thus a much larger

field in terms of books than even the Club display. [Signed]
Stefansson

An August 1, 1932, letter to Eric Morrell at Duke University from an unidentified correspondent, says that Jones expected to publish a bibliography of polar books in association with the Grolier Club. The author claimed to have the largest private collection of polar books—and one can be quite certain that it was Stefansson. The Stefansson Archives at Dartmouth does contain a draft catalogue of the exhibition with an estimated 1600 titles; with multiple-volume sets the total could easily have reached 2000. The publication never happened, but there is some rather rancorous correspondence between Jones and the Club on the subject in the Grolier Club file for the exhibition.

By 1940, the year of his Architectural League exhibit, Bassett Jones seemed to be taking less joy in his collection. On Dec. 5, Jones wrote to Roy Chapman Andrews, Director of the American Museum of Natural History, that because of a change of domicile his lawyer had instructed him to change his will. Now living at 1058 Park Avenue, Jones said that his previous will called for the collection to go to the Explorers Club, but that he was considering changing the designation of his bequest to the AMNH. Andrews was slow to respond, and I have not found what the new will said. At the end of his letter to Andrews, Jones adumbrated a potential earlier end to his collecting: “It is possible that before long I may want to get rid of the collection—turn it over before my demise. It is rather a white elephant.”

By 1944 that became his decision, rather by sale than by gift. He began negotiations with the Columbia University Library through the rare book firm of Duttons at Park Avenue and 48th St. Duttons made the appraisals and apparently received a 45% commission on the sale. I deduce that from a June 28, 1945, letter sent the following year to

Duttons from Stephen McCarthy, Assistant Director of the Columbia Library, who wrote concerning one final transaction. He writes that the titles missing from the appraisal list compared to the titles not listed but provided as part of the sale pretty much evened out with one exception: “The exception is Dionyse, Settle, *A true reporte of the laste voyage... 1577*, which was recorded in the original catalog at \$20. If you are ready to reimburse us for this title [found in the Dutton appraisal but not among the books received by Columbia] on the fifty-five percent basis, or \$11, we should feel that this whole transaction had been satisfactorily concluded.” Settle’s book on Frobisher’s third voyage is one of the rarest of Elizabethan polar titles, but this copy apparently got away.

His polar collection, *Libris Polaris*, was purchased by Columbia, probably in 1944 or 1945. In the Columbia file is a 120-page typed and priced catalogue of his polar library, dated 1944, and checked against Columbia’s own holdings at the time. It includes a large number of single periodicals such as the *National Geographic*, usually at \$1.25, offprints at .50 cents, as well as many high spots. Captain James Cook’s *A Voyage to the South Pole...* (London, 1777) demanded a relatively high price of \$175. The *Aurora Australis*, now the single most expensive Antarctic icon as the first and possibly only book printed in Antarctica, is listed at \$12.50, in a copy signed by both Ernest Shackleton, captain, and George Marston, ship’s artist on the *Nimrod*. George Back’s famous *Narrative of an Expedition in H.M.S. Terror...* (London, 1838) is priced at \$25. Copies of these titles were also on view in our 2005 show and the overlap of books in the two exhibits was nearly 100%, the exceptions being a few books we included that had been published after 1932 and some unique titles like the catalogue of the library aboard *Discovery*, and the Cherry-Garrard’s copy of Tennyson. The highest price listed was Sir Hubert Wilkins’ *Under the North Pole* (New York, 1931) at \$600, a book about the *Nautilus*

expedition of that year, wisely published before the failed expedition but in a copy that had been carried aboard the submarine.⁶ Whatever the final tally, the sale could not have done much to augment Jones's wealth.

It does appear that in the disposal of the duplicates in the collection, the Columbia Library authorities were not sufficiently sensitive to the value of association copies, even when they occurred in duplicate copies, which incidentally were peddled around to the University of Washington, the University of Minnesota, and the Catholic University of America. The saddest case was a set of Blue Books, which had this entry in the priced catalogue: "Bound volume by John Ross. 1824-1850-52. Bad condition. Annotated and indexed by Sir John Ross (includes six Blue Books)." To which was added the note "Not Kept." The Blue Books were the official Parliamentary records of British-sponsored polar expeditions, and Sir John Ross led some of the most controversial of those British explorations between 1819 and 1850. Some of us would now think Ross's volume almost priceless.

A memorable show, it would seem, all but forgotten by Grolier members until the Club's retrospective in 2008 when the chance inclusion of a faded announcement stimulated the kind of bibliophilic hunt that any Grolierite would enjoy. And I hope you've had some vicarious pleasure from my own study of the 1932 show and its progenitors.

⁶ This beautiful uncut copy now in the Columbia University Library (B998 .W653), was published for sponsors of the expedition, was signed by both Wilkins and the Nautilus Commander, Sloan Danenhauer, was authenticated as having been on the voyage, and then conveniently returned in time for the books appearance in the January exhibition. The submarine left New York in early June and the mission was aborted in early September, of 1931.

Postscript: Just prior to May 11, 2009, when this talk was delivered at a Grolier Club special dinner, I discovered another connection between Bassett Jones and the Grolier Club. In the annual report of the *Explorations and Field Work of the Smithsonian Institution in 1937* (Washington, 1938), I found Captain Bob Bartlett’s account of his “Greenland Expedition of 1937” aboard his schooner, the *Morrissey*, in which he describes a new type of gear—an otter trawl—“bought for us by Bassett Jones, of Nantucket and New York. The use of this apparatus opened up a whole new vista of Arctic marine life to our astonished eyes.” (p. 51). After leaving City Island that summer, the vessel stopped at Nantucket, “where Bassett Jones came aboard the *Morrissey* for a day to instruct us in the use of the trawl.” Among the young crew of the *Morrissey* being instructed that day in June 1937 was a young Robert Graff, who much later became President of the Grolier Club, and is still actively pursuing his research and writing on polar bears, among his many other interests.

Sources: In preparation for this talk I was able to use the archives of the American Museum of Natural History, the Bassett Jones archive at Columbia University Library, the Grolier Club’s exhibition file from the 1932 Polar exhibition, and the membership file of the Explorers Club. There are further archives at the Nantucket Historical Association, and in the Stefansson Collection at Dartmouth College; for these I have only seen the catalogue records, the finding aids, and a few selected documents. The American Geographical Society has further relevant materials. I am grateful to all of these institutions for help on this paper.