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ON THE COVER: Jonah and the whale, or fish, from Opera Nova Contemplativa, a book of meditations for Christians. This book is a block book, dated 1530, in which the text and images were printed from engraved wood blocks, long after the invention of movable type. It was given to the Syracuse University Library by Peter Piening, former professor at Syracuse University’s Newhouse School of Public Communications. The Italian text that accompanies the image can be translated as follows: “It is written in the Book of Jonah in the second chapter that after Jonah had been in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, this fish spat him out onto the arid land. Jonah, the one who resurrected from the fish after three days, signifies Christ, who, after three days, came out of the sepulcher and resurrected.”

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Dedicated to William Pearson Tolley (1900–1996)
An Interview with
Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie

BY PAUL J. ARCHAMBAULT

INTRODUCTION:
EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE AT SYRACUSE


Le Roy Ladurie belongs to what some historians refer to as the “third generation” of Annales historians. His more than thirty books and hundreds of articles have included works dealing with long time spans, such as The Peasants of Languedoc (1966) and the History of Climate since the Year 1000 (1983); and with subjects with a microscopic focus such as Carnival in Romans (1979), which focuses on a two-week period around carnival time in a town in the Dauphiné in February 1580, a period marked first by celebration, then by massacre. Professor Ladurie’s popular Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error (1978), a six-hundred-page monograph on a small village in the Pyrenees foothills, was based on the Latin record, written in the year 1320, of questions asked of two hundred inhabitants of the village who were suspected of Cathar heresy by the French inquisitor, Jacques Pamier, bishop of Pamiers, future Avignon pope.

In the 8 November 1979 number of The New York Review of Books, Lawrence Stone, Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University, called LeRoy Ladurie "one of the most . . . original, versatile, and imaginative historians in the world," adding that his French colleague had "an almost unique capacity to capture the imagination of a mass audience, while still retaining the respect and admiration of his professional colleagues."

Professor Ladurie came to the Syracuse University campus for a two-day visit in the fall of 1994. On 8 November 1994, he was a guest of the Syracuse University Library Associates and lectured in the 1916 Room on the topic: "The French National Library: A.D. 1000–2000." The next day he visited the Department of Special Collections and sat in the chair once owned by the "father of modern history," Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), whose vast personal library resides in the department.

Following is a slightly abridged version of an interview with Professor Ladurie at his Paris home on 3 May 1995. The interview dealt with a range of topics, from French "new history" to Professor Ladurie's experiences as a top library administrator and civil servant under a Socialist government. The interview was conducted in French. Professor Ladurie has approved this English translation.
An Interview with Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie

I. THE HISTORIAN'S CAREER. THE ANNALES
AND ITS IMPACT

PA: The review *Annales E.S.C.*,¹ of which you are one of the codirectors, recently celebrated its sixty-fifth anniversary. Do you see a continuity between the review founded by Marc Bloch² and Lucien Febvre³ and the review of today? What, in your opinion, have been the strong moments of the review? What direction will it take in the future?

ELRLD: There is certainly a continuity, insofar as the review has remained faithful to certain decisions made with respect to rigor, to an “anti-event” orientation, and to quantification. This orientation came, if not from Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre directly, at least

¹. *Annales E.S.C.* is the journal’s current title. Since its creation in 1929 the journal has had four titles: *Annales d’histoire économique et sociale* (1929–39); *Annales d’histoire sociale* (1939–42; 1945); *Mélanges d’histoire sociale* (1942–44); *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (1946–). See Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 117, n. 2.

². Born in 1886, Marc Bloch was cofounder (1929) and codirector of the *Annales* with Lucien Febvre until 1942. Bloch revolutionized modern historical methodology with books like *Les Rois thaumaturges* (*The royal touch*) (1924), *Les Caractères originaux de l’histoire rurale française* (*French rural history: An essay on its basic characteristics*) (1966), and *La Société féodale* (*Feudal society*) (1961). Bloch was arrested by the Gestapo as a member of the French Resistance and, after being tortured, was executed on 16 June 1944.

³. Lucien Febvre (1878–1956) was cofounder of the *Annales* with Marc Bloch at the University of Strasbourg, where both held chairs of history. He was appointed to the chair of history of modern civilization at the Collège de France in 1933. Febvre’s conception of history as a synthesis of various disciplines is most explicitly set forth in *Le Problème de l’incroyance au XVIIe siècle: La Religion de Rabelais* (*The problem of unbelief in the sixteenth century: Rabelais’s Religion*) (1942), and in a series of largely polemical essays grouped under the title *Combats pour l’histoire* (1953; reprint 1992) (*A new kind of history: From the writings of Lucien Febvre*).
from their school. The review had simultaneously a willingness to open itself to the great outside world, to do a history of the masses, a history of material production, and to be open to certain current trends, for example, the interest in the history of the Mediterranean peoples.

As far as the strong moments of the review are concerned, I see several: the thirties, of course, for which we now have the entire correspondence of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre; the postwar era, when Jacques Le Goff and I became directors of the review,

4. Owing to the combative tone of Lucien Febvre’s early articles, the Annales soon acquired a reputation for favoring “anti-événementiel” (nonevent-centered) history, that is, for rejecting traditional, chronologically sequenced history based largely on the chief political and diplomatic events of the French nation.


6. Born in 1924, Jacques Le Goff is professor of historical anthropology at the
starting around 1965 or so. It was then that we broadened our interests to include biological history, a history of societies, ethnological history, and to a certain extent, a history of climates. We attempted to create what were then considered new “territories.”

Since that time, of course, we have “reproduced” a number of devotees, both within the review and elsewhere.

As far as continuity of development goes, I believe the Annales has branched out from and enriched the fundamental axis of historiography since its very beginning. It must continue to take into account the importance of events (in spite of its reputation for being an “anti-événementiel” journal), and the importance of great historical figures, but of course, these are to be found within the “thick mass” of historical materials. That is what the Annales have brought us. Whether everyone at the Annales would follow me on this point, I’m not sure. I rather see myself as “post-Braudelian.”

PA: What do you mean by “post-Braudelian”?

ELRLD: I mean simply that I would rather accept Braudel’s “à la carte” than order the whole menu. I like to think it’s possible to follow Braudel selectively without having to follow him in every instance.

Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (VIIe Section) in Paris. He has been codirector of Annales E.S.C. with Le Roy Ladurie and Marc Ferro since 1969. Le Goff’s many books include Marchands et banquiers au moyen âge ( Merchants and bankers in the Middle Ages) (1956), La Civilisation de l’occident médiéval (The civilization of the medieval West) (1965), La Naissance du purgatoire (The birth of purgatory) (1981), and Histoire et mémoire (History and memory) (1986).

7. “Territory” is a favorite term with Le Roy Ladurie. Several of his key essays on the historical métier have been collected in a two-volume collection entitled Le Territoire de l’historien (The territory of the historian) (1979).

8. A disciple and protégé of Lucien Febvre, Fernand Braudel (1902–1985) held the chair of modern history at the Collège de France from 1949 to 1972. Braudel’s most influential work was La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II (1949; rev. ed. 1966) (The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean world in the age of Philip II). For three decades, from the death of Lucien Febvre in 1956 to his own death in 1985, Braudel was considered the leading and most powerful French historian. See Burke, French Historical Revolution, 43.
PA: Does that mean you wish to return to an event-centered conception of history?

ELRLD: No, of course not. A purely event-centered history is absurd. But the important thing is what other things the event can reveal. If Febvre, in particular, had a predilection for economic history, which he knew particularly well, it was out of a desire to “reconcile peoples.” To do this during the twenties and thirties—at a time when people were not at all ready for reconciliation, when perverse men like Stalin and Hitler were weighing on the future of humanity, and when war, or preparation for war, was on everyone’s mind—seems something of a paradox, in my opinion.

PA: We’ll return to your conception of the “history of events” later on in this interview when we discuss the making of your book on the Platters.9 Let’s stay with the Annales for the time being, and its relation to your career as historian. Among the great historians of the past who were linked to the Annales—Bloch, Febvre, Braudel—which would you say most influenced your orientation as a historian? And were there other factors—your readings, your teachers, people you met—impacting on your decision to become a historian, and especially a historian of rural life?

ELRLD: Well, rather curiously, at a certain moment the man who had the greatest influence on me in the university world was Ernest Labrousse, whom we don’t hear about as much as we used to though he has not been forgotten. He was a great “quantitativist” historian for his time, and wrote about the history of prices in the eighteenth century, the so-called economic crisis of the French Revolution, about which I would differ with him. But on the rising scale of prices in the eighteenth century he wrote a remarkable work.10 Labrousse represented for me a transition from a purely

9. Le Roy Ladurie’s Le Siècle des Platter 1499—1628, 1. Le Mendiant et le professeur (The century of the Platters, I. The Beggar and the Professor) (Paris: Fayard, 1995) had recently appeared in print. It is a study of two generations of Basel humanists, Thomas Platter Senior and his two sons Felix and Thomas.

10. A Marxist economic historian, Ernest Labrousse (b. 1895) held a chair of history at the Sorbonne and wrote a multivolume economic and social history, Histoire économique et sociale de la France (Paris: Parti Socialiste Uni, 1970–82). The
dogmatic Marxism to a more quantitative approach to history. But he was a rather narrow man. And indeed I met Braudel a bit later, when I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

Braudel was, in an early phase of my career, my administrative protector. He helped me find my first teaching position, was very interested in what I was doing, and I, in turn, was very influenced by his thinking. In many ways Braudelian thought was very general. He made the idea of "longue durée" a household word, but "longue durée" is a concept quickly exhausted. It's a kind of conceptual diesel engine, able to function on cheap fuel! Let's take Marxism: it's a crazy ideology, but very detailed: you have concepts like infrastructure, superstructure, forces of production, relations of production, etc. It's a whole sophisticated mechanism. But "longue durée" is a concept that, once used, doesn't lead you very far. You wonder what it applies to. It certainly represents an interesting intellectual position.

This being said, Braudel's Mediterranean had an enormous influence on me.

PA: You read it immediately after its first publication?

ELRLD: I was still very much immersed in Stalinism when it appeared, but in 1953, when I was preparing my Agrégation, I read it,

“remarkable book” Le Roy Ladurie is here alluding to is Labrousse’s classic work L’Esquisse des mouvements des prix at des revenus en France au XVIIIe siècle (Outline of the movements of prices and revenues in France in the eighteenth century) (1933).


12. During the years following its first publication in 1949, Braudel's The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World had a great impact on historians in and outside of France, especially part 1, dealing with the “ever-recurring cycles” of Mediterranean history, and part 2, dealing with “collective destinies and general trends.” See Peter Burke’s discussion of the book in French Historical Revolution, 33-42.

13. The Agrégation has no precise American equivalent. The concours d’agréation is a highly selective national competition, given annually in several academic disciplines, comprising arduous written and oral examinations. Being numbered among the elect (normally less than five percent of those competing) guarantees
and I was much impressed by Braudel's way of doing history. Historians could no longer ignore it. One had to do geographical history, economic history. As for Braudel's other works, the article on the "longue durée" is important. I think his *Capitalism* is an important work, but has anyone really read Braudel's *Capitalism*? The book is sold in airports in the United States, but I've often asked myself whether anybody reads it.

But Braudel was at the same time an empire builder, a rather difficult but very rich personality. He was a man of power, well connected, who managed to create a great number of research positions. He also knew how to recognize people of talent. Braudel had a great flair for dealing with people. He was a master, in every sense of the word.

Lucien Febvre is a man I never really knew. The campaign that has been waged against him by some American historians who accuse him of being anti-Semitic seems grotesque to me.

PA: Is this "campaign" something recent?

ELRLD: Yes, there are a few Grand Inquisitors who are indulging in political correctness by making accusations that are shocking, especially when you consider the work Febvre did on the sixteenth century. The bibliography of his publications, especially on the sixteenth century, fills an entire volume, which means a lot of reading for those who want to attack him.

PA: He had a provocative side to him, of course. I was rereading his *Combats pour l'histoire* recently, and I was struck once again by the dynamism of his personality, which must have impressed those who knew him, favorably or unfavorably. He had a very abrupt, provocative manner of formulating problems.

a tenured academic position but also opens avenues in diplomacy and other civil positions.


15. Le Roy Ladurie seems to be alluding here to Natalie Zemon Davis's criticism of Lucien Febvre's failure to criticize or confront the German occupiers of France during the years 1940–44. Febvre's book on Rabelais appeared in 1942 after clearance by the Vichy censors.
ELRLD: He often treated other people as if they were stupid. Unfortunately, this is an accepted form of behavior in the *Annales* milieu, where historians have a tendency to treat other scholars with contempt.

As for Bloch, what really stands out for me is his book on the original characteristics of French feudalism, which posed key questions about the rural landscape. It was a book that had a great importance for me early in my career—I must have read it between 1955 and 1957. Since Bloch's time, of course, rural history has been enriched by ten thousand years. Through archeology and prehistory we know things that Bloch could not possibly have known, about the introduction of agriculture in Europe and in America, the planting of corn, etc. Carbon 14, for example, allows us to give precise dates concerning the arrival of agriculture five, eight, even ten thousand years before Christ, in the Mediterranean, the Danube region, present-day France, England, etc. The same thing holds for China, India, the Middle East, North America, Mexico, South America (with the invention of corn by the Indians), etc. This really enables us to have a world history, a history that is very much an *Annales* history, since by definition it is a "nonevent" type of history, with no events of political history at all.

PA: As regards your becoming a historian of rural life, did you make that decision when you chose your subject for your doctoral thesis?

ELRLD: This choice was due both to chance and to the "servitudes" of existence. America is a rich country where, through a system of grants or fellowships, a historian from, say, a Midwestern university can decide to be a historian of Turkey, or China, or Europe, and can find the library resources, then the fellowship that allows her to do some on-site research. There was nothing of the kind in the France of the fifties. Though team research already existed, especially in Paris in the circle surrounding Braudel, researchers teaching in the universities of Provence were somewhat isolated and had to give up the idea of doing anything original. I

had thought of doing my doctoral thesis on the economic crisis of the nineteenth century, but I hadn't the means to do so at Montpellier. So I had to fall back on rural history. One of my colleagues in geography suggested I look into surveyors' reports since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and I realized that I had an original resource for historical research.

Another factor in my choosing rural history was that on my father's side I came from the rural bourgeoisie of Normandy. This relation with my father had been a conflictual one, but I decided nevertheless to make this my field of research. It had not been my intention to do this for the rest of my life.

PA: This was at the time you received your first appointment at the University of Montpellier, wasn't it?17

ELRLD: Yes.

PA: Besides your work in the local archives, what other kinds of research did you do? Did you, for example, do any research among the peasants themselves?

ELRLD: I traveled a great deal and observed the peasantry. I knew the region very well. And there were rich archives in the local town halls as well, so I had to travel throughout the area.

PA: Here's a rather complex question concerning your historical methodology. Some of your best known works, such as The Peasants of Languedoc or the History of Climate since the Year 1000, cover periods of "longue durée." Others, like Montaillou, The Sorceress of Jasmin, or Carnival in Romans cover subjects or events of very short

17. After receiving the agrégation, Le Roy Ladurie was appointed professor of history at the Lycée de Montpellier (1955–57). Then he was attached to a local branch of a national research institute, the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (1958–60). He was subsequently named assistant in history at the University of Montpellier (1960–63). His research on the rural life of the Montpellier region led to the prestigious doctorat d'état (state doctoral thesis) and to its publication in a two-volume work, Les Paysans de Languedoc (1966) (Peasants of Languedoc, trans. with an introduction by John Day [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974]). For a personal discussion of those years, see his Paris-Montpellier 1945–1963 (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 200.
duration. Do long-period works demand a different methodology? More quantitative analysis? Do they involve more risks, require more speculation, generalization, large perspectives?

ELRLD: I’m wondering if this isn’t a pseudo-problem. If I look back to the work I have done in the past ten years or so, I find some articles that I might term quantitative or “serial.” Maybe they’re not worthy of the research done by American econometricians, but I have done research on demography in the Duke of Saint-Simon’s memoirs, etc. The demographic history, the radioactive study of coins, the history of the book, which I’ve done as part of a cataloging project at the Bibliothèque Nationale—these are entirely classic works in serial history. These studies were published in reviews like the Annales and the Annuaire du Collège de France, and though they did not attract too much attention I considered them very important.

And then you mustn’t forget that I did the History of Modern France in two volumes, for the Hachette publishing house.18 Somebody told me this was “vulgarization.” Not at all. These two volumes required much reflection, and though the work involves a long “duration,” it is a classic work of history, though it has a coloration of economic, social, and political history. The Peasants of Languedoc and the History of Climate are both, as you say, works involving the “longue durée.” Montaillou covers a short duration of thirty years, which allows one to do a microscopic analysis, since it deals with a short period and a small community, about which we were fortunate to have an extraordinary document (and I am a great believer in documents).19 The Carnival in Romans deals with an extraordinarily short duration—there is an element of coy provocation about this book—but it also contains larger analyses about the city of Romans itself.20 Finally, my book on the Platters

19. Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error covers the period 1294–1324 and is based on the inquisitor’s record (see introduction).
20. Carnival in Romans covers essentially a two-week period in the town of Romans in February 1580 (see introduction).
covers over a century, in theory, and is consequently "layered" with considerations pertaining to that century.\textsuperscript{21}

I don't think my books have different "methodologies," as you put it. You sometimes have what might be called a "microhistory," which one hopes can enlighten the subsequent history of humanity. I have used quantitative history in technical studies dealing with the history of precious metals, the history of books, and demographic history. My book on the Platters, on the other hand, or \textit{Montaillou}, deals more with the qualitative.

As regards what you call "greater risks," of course they exist if you are dealing with vast generalizations and syntheses—which history professors tend to do when they are past sixty; they deal with "world" history and often "risk" saying just about anything. On the other hand, when you are dealing with a subject that is well known to you of course generalizations are needed. Personally I find myself inspired by those great German-Jewish scholars who knew Russian, German, Italian, French, English, etc.—people of enormous learning, like Kantorowicz\textsuperscript{22} and others.

PA: I'd like to ask you a final question concerning the impact of the \textit{Annales} on other disciplines. Currently it is often the case that \textit{Annales} historians—and social scientists linked directly or indirectly to that journal—are those who most often represent French thought in universities abroad.

I was trained in literature, and when I was in graduate school toward the end of the fifties, "French thought" was still represented essentially by Sartre and Camus, the former an Agrégé in philosophy, the latter a Nobel laureate in literature. French lecturers in the United States in those days were most often novelists and poets, or so it seemed to me. By the end of the seventies, social sciences seemed to take the lead over literature. The figures best known in American universities were historians like yourself and François

\textsuperscript{21} The two-volume \textit{Le Siècle des Platter} covers the period 1599–1628.

\textsuperscript{22} Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963), a distinguished German-Jewish scholar who fled Nazi Germany and emigrated to America. Among his best-known works is \textit{The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).
Furet, and of course there were leading philosophers like Paul Ricoeur, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida.\textsuperscript{23}

It is my view that though the \textit{Annales} had a great impact on other disciplines, and has promoted interdisciplinarity in general, the review has had little impact on literary history or criticism. I don't know of any literary historian whose thinking has been shaped by the \textit{Annales}. I would even add that literary history and criticism are right now "on the back burner" in France and producing very little original work. Is that your view?

\textbf{ELRLD:} I have a similar impression. Marc Fumaroli,\textsuperscript{24} of course, is a brilliant figure. There was Barthes,\textsuperscript{25} who had the misfortune of dying relatively young and did not have any successors.

\textsuperscript{23} François Furet (b. 1927) has written several works on the French Revolution taking issue with a Marxist view that has held sway in France since the late nineteenth century, especially \textit{Penser la Révolution française} (Thinking the French Revolution) (Paris: Gallimard, 1978). He has also edited, with Mona Ozouf, \textit{A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution}, (trans. Artur Goldhammer [Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989]). Paul Ricoeur (b. 1913) is an internationally known philosopher. He is currently professor of philosophy emeritus at the University of Chicago. Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was engaged in a multivolume history of sexuality at the time of his death. He lectured widely in the United States, especially at the universities of Buffalo, Berkeley, and Davis. Jacques Derrida (b. 1930) is professor of philosophy at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris. His major works include \textit{De la gramma­matologie} (1967), \textit{L’Ecriture et la différence} (Writing and difference) (1967), \textit{La Dissémi­nation} (1972), and \textit{La Carte postale} (The postcard) (1987). He has lectured widely in American universities.

\textsuperscript{24} Marc Fumaroli holds the chair of French literature at the Collège de France in Paris. He has written books on Poussin and French literature. During the years of Mitterandian socialism (1981–86 and 1988–91) he took violent issue with the populist orientation of the cultural policies of Jack Lang, Mitterand's minister of culture.

\textsuperscript{25} Perhaps the most original literary and social critic of the last half century in France, Roland Barthes (1915–1980) combined intuitions derived from Freud, Marx, and [Ferdinand de] Saussurian linguistics with a highly personal, intuitive reading of texts to produce scores of works. Among the most influential are: \textit{Le degré zéro de l’écriture} (The degree zero of writing) (1953), \textit{Mythologies} (1957), \textit{Sade, Fourier, Loyola} (1971), \textit{Le Plaisir du texte} (The pleasure of the text) (1973), and \textit{L’Empire des signes} (The empire of signs) (1970).
When Sartre, for example, did his long phenomenological study on Flaubert,\textsuperscript{26} he didn’t do any archival work such as might be expected of an \textit{Annales} historian.

I’m unable to comment on the value of Sartre’s work on Flaubert. I do know, however, that Michel Crouzet’s biography of Stendhal involved a great deal of archival research. There, I think, is a good example of a literary historian. I think the chief problem with literary history is that either you’re dealing with petty salon problems that are best discussed over a cup of tea, or with the traditional academic scholarship of the Sorbonne variety. We don’t seem to have come up with any middle solution.

II. A RECENT PUBLICATION: THE HISTORY OF THE PLATTERS

With your permission I would like to ask you a few questions about the first volume of your history of the Platters, \textit{The Beggar and the Professor}, which was recently published. First, how did you discover the Platters?

I knew of them back in 1955 because of their connections with Montpellier. Historians at Montpellier knew the existing French translations, which were mediocre and had been mutilated.

PA: It’s a fact, isn’t it, that there were nineteenth-century translations of the Platters’ diaries?

ELRLD: Yes, and people relied on them. The major obstacle, of course, was the language. I have studied a great deal of German, though I do not speak it well. I read High German easily, but the problem with the Platters’ diaries was that they were written in the Basel dialect. That world was closed to me. I used the existing Swiss editions, which are excellent.

I was also interested in the Platters because of my interest in the Alps. I have known Alpine mountaineers who, like the Platters of

the sixteenth century, "climbed up" the social ladder to become, not painters or city planners (like the Platters), but at least metal workers . . . by "climbing down" the Alps. It's an expression of sorts with them: you climb up by climbing down. (You might compare them with the Appalachian hillbillies in the United States.)

I had written a few short pieces about the Platters before, but in writing this book I was making an old dream come true. The story of the Platters is based on a fascinating assortment of texts, and I enjoy writing about people whose biographies are a résumé, a mirror, a magnifying lens, as it were, of an entire period. I could have written about Saint-Simon on the reign of Louis XIV, but much has already been written on that subject in France. The advantage with the Platters is that, though they have been much written about in the German-speaking world, there is little written on them in French or in English.

PA: They were itinerant humanists, of course, and their travels make them eyewitnesses of some of the great events of the sixteenth century.

ELRLD: As I said in the dedication of my first volume, they are a "distant mirror" of the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. I wrote about Thomas Platter Senior's identity crisis, a violent conversion to iconoclasm around 1520 or so. The Platters were involved in various humanistic movements of the century, in and around Basel. For example, Thomas Senior abandoned the harsh, violent form of Protestantism he had known in his early years, with Zwingli and Calvin. As far as the two Platter sons were concerned, their training in medicine gave them access to Greek culture. We know, moreover, that they were great collectors who built up distinguished art collections. Without being extraordinary people, they were representative of the Renaissance. They illustrate a certain type of Franco-German relationship that seems to me characteristic. They shed light on the rapport between Catholic France

27. Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon (1675-1755), whose memoirs of the late reign of Louis XIV (1700-1715) and of the French Regency (1723-29) are one of the chief sources of court history for that era.
and Protestant Germany, and on the social mobility of the times, which existed then as it does today, though in a different mode.  

PA: You state on several occasions that one of the Platters suffered from depressions that were perhaps due to religious conflicts within himself.

ELRLD: Felix Platter, Thomas’s son, is the one who wrote most about the depressions he suffered. Incidentally, I believe that a history of depression would make for particularly interesting reading. In America, Klibansky and Panofsky have done a history of melancholy, which is entitled *Saturn and Melancholy*. You’re correct in saying that I mentioned Felix’s bouts with depression; but I didn’t draw any conclusions from them.

PA: They seem to occur in moments when Felix feels his Protestantism to be in conflict with his Catholic environment. Was Felix’s conflict essentially religious? Or have I misread you?

ELRLD: It’s rather the effect of solitude on a Protestant child in a Catholic country. This is the type of raw material that could serve toward a history of depression. The Platters book is a kind of window on a period, which is what I had tried to do with *Montaillou*. The Platters book does not have the scandalous character of *Montaillou*, which appealed to a certain voyeurism when it was published, especially in its American edition, which was mutilated by

28. Le Roy Ladurie’s claim is borne out by the book. The Platters—Thomas and his sons Felix and Thomas Junior—are extraordinary examples of social mobility in the Rhineland in the sixteenth century. Starting out as a poor shepherd boy from the Valais region, Thomas the Elder (1499–1582) is an itinerant beggar, then a ropemaker, before becoming a professor of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at Basel, where he also sets up a famous printing press. This autodidact and self-made man then provides his son Thomas with the means to travel and study in Montpellier and Paris. The diaries of both Platters are a most informative account of the encounter of Swiss Protestant humanists raised in the Basel dialect, with the Catholic culture of France in the century of the Reformation.

an unscrupulous editor who took it upon himself to cut out all the “boring” parts and keep the “sexy” ones.

PA: The new tone is already reflected in the English title, Montail­lou: The Promised Land of Error.30

ELRLD: The American edition omits about one third of the original. I couldn’t defend myself at the time. . . . You might call it a “version” of my book, but it isn’t entirely my book.

But in the case of the Platters these problems don’t occur. Nev­ertheless, it’s a book with a broad range of vision, since it starts around 1500; and by the time I finish the [projected] second vol­ume, we’ll have reached the year 1628, with rather complete ob­servations about that period. The witnesses to this period express things very deeply. It’s also an important period in the history of medicine. You probably remember that 1628 is the year of William Harvey’s discovery of the circulatory system. The Platters, of course, represent a rather backward view of medicine.

What I have attempted here is a kind of book on “Western civi­lization.” Western civilization books, like their corresponding courses, have their value, though they are often rightly open to question. In writing them one risks being superficial and repeating what other authors have written before. I have written a kind of Western civilization book from an isolated, irreplaceable experience.

PA: Let’s turn for a moment to the subject of event-centered (“evenementielle”) history apropos of your book on the Platters. A few reviews of The Beggar and the Professor spoke of a “return to great narrative history.” (This was a phrase used by Pierre Chaunu31 in Le Figaro, I believe.) For the last couple of decades,

30. Le Roy Ladurie is here reflecting on the changes inflicted by translators on an original work once that work becomes their legal property. The change of ti­tle was obviously done without the translator’s consulting the author.

31. Pierre Chaunu, a prolific historian of the Annales group, has written a multivolume history of Seville and the Atlantic in the sixteenth and seventeenth cen­turies that was much inspired in its methodology by Braudel’s Mediterranean. His review of Ladurie’s book on the Platters appeared in the daily, Le Figaro, in late January 1995.
some of the French “new historians” have been talking about a “return to the event.” Pierre Nora used that phrase back in 1975.32

ELRLD: Lawrence Stone33 of Princeton has also spoken of a “return to the event.”

PA: About this I have a threefold question: (1) Is there a return, in the so-called “new history,” to narrativity and event? (2) Do you consider your history of the Platters to be an “événementiel” piece of writing? (3) Or does the public have a false conception of “new history,” thinking it more hostile to traditional historiography than it really is?

ELRLD: Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch both mounted a campaign, which was perfectly justified at the time, against a purely “événementiel” history, which perhaps wasn’t as backward as they claimed but wasn’t very good history either. But it is surprising that these great men, who lived between two great wars and had even (in Marc Bloch’s case) participated in them should have proceeded to such a negation of the event and of its importance in history. Surely they both knew what it means to feel the “weight” of historical events. I believe this aspect of their approach has become somewhat dated. (Marc Bloch, after all, was assassinated by the Germans: wasn’t that an “event”?) If you mean by “anti-événementiel” history a structural approach to an era, of course there’s truth to that, too.

PA: Didn’t “anti-événementiel” also connote a hostility to a history founded on the concept of nation?

ELRLD: To a purely nationalistic history, of course. But when they spoke of a “return to the event,” both Lawrence Stone and Pierre Nora were pleased to admit that the event exists! The sociologist


Edgar Morin, for one, derided those historians who deny events, especially if you reflect on what the past fifty years have demonstrated about the unpredictability of events. Nobody foresaw the events of May 1968, and only a few scholars predicted the fall of communism. Events seem to have a liberty all their own!

PA: Let’s return to one part of my earlier question. Do you think the Platters book represents some sort of “return to the event,” or has the public been wrong in thinking that “new” historians like yourself have been hostile to event-centered history?

ELRLD: There isn’t a “new history.” There’s just history as it has existed since Thucydides and Tacitus. Historians tend to reject a model, then return to it. We can distance ourselves from this model creatively, by doing economic history, or quantitative history, for example, but sooner or later one returns to the model. Remember what Jaurès once said: “It’s by flowing into the sea that rivers remain most faithful to their sources.” While I believe that the Annales school has made an enormous contribution, there aren’t a million different ways to write it.

III. Historian, Citizen, Library Administrator, Teacher in America

PA: Here are some questions of a more personal nature, directed to you as historian, citizen, library administrator, and teacher in America. You had a politically radical period in your youth: you were a member of the Communist Party from 1949 to 1956, and a member of the United Socialist Party (PSU) for several years

34. Born in 1930, Edgar Morin, a French sociologist, has written on a variety of subjects, from the drug scene in San Francisco to the politics and government of Europe. See his Journal de Californie (Paris: Seuil, 1970).


36. The PSU, or Parti Socialiste Uni, was created in the sixties, rallying disappointed former members of the Communist Party and other left-wing intellectuals who could no longer identify with the rigid dogmatism of official communism. Rather than stress doctrines such as class struggle or the dictatorship of
thereafter. During that period you broke with traditions for which you seem to have a greater respect today.

Would you say that there has been a symbiosis, or at least a parallel, between the various political positions you have assumed and the development of your career as a historian? Are there historical methods which you used previously and which you use no longer?

ELRLD: Not at all. I still do quantitative history occasionally, and I occasionally write more traditional historical narrative. It all depends on the subject, the center of interest. It’s what I meant a while ago by my “à la carte” use of Braudelism.

PA: You obviously take a broad European approach to your teaching of the European past, as you did in your public lectures at the Collège de France this past winter. Do you consider yourself, politically, a “European”? Do you think France will, or should, continue to maintain a French character in a united Europe?

ELRLD: I am a “European” in my politics. I have been militantly in favor of the United States of Europe. I think Europe ought to be considered the way France was considered in the eighteenth century. France was a single nation, but it was criss-crossed by customs barriers. I think that in the face of problems like immigration, it might be a good idea to establish barriers; not an Iron Curtain, mind you, but it wouldn’t be a bad idea to have a frontier, at least. To say this does not mean at all that one is anti-European. French identity is a far easier thing to defend than Breton identity, for example, since France has a language that has been taught for a long time in its schools. So there is no contradiction between being French and being European, as on a smaller scale one can be a faithful citizen of the Republic of Geneva and a citizen of Switzerland.

In any case, I don’t separate the two, and I am astonished to note that the English, who have the enormous privilege of having a language spoken worldwide, an extraordinary guaranty of cultural supranationality, make no concessions on this matter. Their fantas-

the proletariat, the PSU emphasized a Marxism with a human face, including autogestion, or self-management of industrial firms by the workers themselves.
tic privilege in the field of supranationality ought to incite them, at
times, to make some concessions to the supranationality of others.

PA: In your lectures on “Europe around 1600” this past winter you
insisted a great deal on the importance of Europe’s religious history.
Do you think that the fact that European Russia is traditionally Or­
thodox and that the rest of Europe west of the Russian border is his­
torically Protestant or Catholic, precludes the creation of a united
Europe, as De Gaulle once put it, “from the Atlantic to the Urals”?

ELRLD: I suppose we should say “from the Atlantic to Vladivostock,” because Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals” was a con­
ception that existed only in General De Gaulle’s imagination.37
Russia, after all, extends all the way to the Pacific.

But as to the real point of your question, I do think religion very
important to the European question. Not that we should, like Max
Weber,38 privilege Protestantism [for its role in the development of
capitalism]. Belgium, for example, which was an entirely Catholic
country, was the second most industrialized country in Europe in
1823, first of all because it had a well educated population, with re­
ligious motivations that were not Protestant, but Catholic, Jesuit,
Jansenist, and sometimes agnostic. And we shouldn’t forget the im­
portance of the Belgian coal mines! I think the economic history of
Europe is linked with Christianity—whether Protestant or Catholic—in Belgium, Germany, northern France, England, and
the United States. Protestantism was, of course, a very stimulating
factor, but it was not irreplaceable.

37. In a speech delivered in Strasbourg in November 1964, Charles de Gaulle,
founder and first president of the French Fifth Republic, commenting on his
policy of rapprochement with the Soviet Union, had opened the prospect of a
peacefully united Europe “from the Atlantic to the Urals.” The phrase became
almost as famous as Churchill’s “Iron Curtain.” See André Passeron, De Gaulle
38. Max Weber (1864–1920), the German sociologist and economist, made the
celebrated association between the rise of European capitalism and the Protestant
work ethic in a classic work, Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus
(The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, trans. Talcott Parsons [New York:
Scribner, 1958]).
All the same, Max Weber did have a very good intuition when he said that religion can be a prime factor in industrialization and modernization. And we note today the impact that religious movements long dormant like Buddhism and Confucianism are having, in favoring the economic awakening of countries like Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, China, and Vietnam.

In Europe, the Protestant-Catholic problem has for a long time been resolved, except in Northern Ireland, but that really seems to be a residual problem, and I think some solution will be found. Today's united Europe was in great part fashioned by Catholic statesmen—men like Monnet, De Gasperi, Schuman. It should be pointed out that it was the defeated powers of the last war who made the Europe of today. It was a humiliated European continent that attempted to recover its identity and its vigor, which explains perhaps why the English don't feel entirely at ease in the European community. I don't think that there is any problem at present between Catholics and Protestants in Europe, and an interesting fact is that one of the most vigorous countries in Europe, Germany, is a country where Catholics have become, in certain areas, a dominating social force. Bismarck's Germany was dominated by Protestantism, but in the Germany of Adenauer and Kohl, Catholicism has weighed more heavily.

As for Orthodox Christianity, it does indeed seem to pose a problem: it is countries like Russia, the Ukraine, Romania, Bul-

39. Jean Monnet (1888–1979), Alcide De Gasperi (1881–1954), and Robert Schuman (1886–1963) are usually credited with the initiation of the idea of a "united Europe" in the years immediately following World War II.

40. Otto E. Bismarck (1815–1898), a Lutheran and a member of the Prussian Junker class, was prime minister (1867–71) of the Kingdom of Prussia under Wilhelm I, before becoming chancellor of the Second Reich (1871–1890). Bismarck played a central role in the unification of the German Second Reich.

garia, and the former Yugoslavia who have had the most difficult time achieving a transition in the postcommunist period. In Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, the picture appears healthier. Greece has its problems, too. It’s certainly the most nationalistic member of the European Community and manages, somehow, to be on bad terms with all its neighbors, though it is not always at fault.

Without talking about Orthodox Christianity as if it were an unavoidable “destiny,” there does seem to be a particularly “Orthodox” political behavior. This, however, should not prevent Europe from extending and developing eastward, first toward the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, then, in a kind of second step, toward the countries we have qualified as “Orthodox.” But I cannot help noticing that in the latter countries it is the old communist nomenklatura that continues to rule, in a democratic disguise.

PA: Many of the old communist leaders do seem to be still around. Don’t you think that the old Orthodox wariness toward Rome and the Latin church might also be a factor in Eastern Europe’s defensiveness toward the West?

ELRLD: But Romania, which is Orthodox, is one of the most Francophone countries in the world! No, there are other considerations. Orthodox Christianity never had a Renaissance. Perhaps Catholic countries never had a Protestant Reformation, but they did have a Renaissance and an Enlightenment. Russia did have a period of Enlightenment, but it then seems to have lost some of the Western and European elements it had acquired. None of this is predetermined, however.

PA: To pursue the subject of the survival of religious ideas in present-day Europe: I read in a recent encyclical by Pope John Paul II the view that in any conflict between “civil law” and “moral law” a Catholic is compelled to choose moral law. In your opinion, is this distinction a prolongation of the old medieval distinction be-

42. In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, published in March 1995, Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła, b. 1920) urges Catholics to disobey civil law, if need be, in the name of moral law, on questions such as the allowing of abortion.
tween temporal and spiritual power? Or might we say that this distinction rather prolongs the dispute on matters of conscience between Protestants and Catholics in the sixteenth century? In other words, isn’t the “lay” character of the European democracies an outcome of the Protestant Reformation?

ELRLD: The Reformation was a first step, of course. But Protestantism is a factor in Protestant countries above all. The “lay” character of countries like France and Italy does not derive from Protestantism but from the Enlightenment, which is an ideology that has little to do with Christianity. (Voltaire, remember, was an anti-Christian Deist.) Let’s not privilege, as is often done, the importance of Protestantism, which in the case of France, was marginalized as a historical force after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.44

As far as the Pope’s declarations go, I think he says what he is supposed to say. That doesn’t mean one is obliged to follow him on every point. Allow me to read this text from La Bruyère. In a section entitled “On the Pulpit,” La Bruyère says about preaching:

A soft, relaxed morality falls with the one who preaches it. It has nothing to awaken and pique the curiosity of the man of the world, who fears a severe doctrine less than one thinks, and who loves it even in the person who does his duty by proclaiming it. It seems, then, as if there exist in the Church two states, as it were, that must constitute it: that of speaking the truth to the fullest extent, without deference, without disguise; and that of listening to it avidly, with

43. Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet, 1694–1778) was known for his scathing wit in the face of religious orthodoxy, his defense of human rights and religious pluralism, and his conception of God as “supreme clockmaker.”

44. The Edict of Nantes, a decree granting freedom of worship to Protestants in several major French cities, was promulgated by King Henri IV, a Navarre Protestant who converted to Catholicism in 1598, thus bringing to an end three decades of religious wars in France. The revocation of the edict in 1685 by King Louis XIV, under the influence of his bigoted former mistress, Madame de Maintenon, inaugurated a period of renewed persecution and repression of Protestants, which lasted until the French Revolution of 1789.
taste, with admiration, with praise, and to act, nevertheless, neither worse nor better than before.\textsuperscript{45}

I think La Bruyère says it all here. I think there are people whose business is to say what must be done, and then there is real life. The Pope attempts to fix rules which he knows very well are not entirely applied. We shouldn’t expect the Pope to speak the language of \textit{True Confessions}, or to use the language of the most recent pornographic film or of “Fun Radio.”\textsuperscript{46} The Pope’s language is not that of the modern world—which does not mean that we’re obliged to follow the Pope every time he says something.

PA: So you don’t think that the opposition between “civil law” and “moral law” prolongs a conflict born of the Reformation?

ELRLD: Let me repeat: I think Protestantism began this movement, but the conflict did not take the same direction in every country in modern times. In Catholic and Latin countries the break between “moral” and “civil” law has a different history from that in Protestant countries. Unquestionably, the United States, for example, is a more religious country than France because of the different way this conflict evolved.

PA: Now I have some questions concerning your career as a French civil official. For more than seven years (1986–94) you served as administrator general of the Bibliothèque Nationale. It was a period of great modernization of the research tools of the BN as well as a period of “social peace,” as the French expression goes.


\textsuperscript{46} A call-in radio show aired daily, and directed largely toward French teenagers who enjoy open discussions about sex and related questions and problems.
There wasn’t a single personnel strike at the BN during this whole period, and that is by no means the least of your accomplishments. What lessons did you derive from those years as a high state official?

ELRLD: A lesson of “proximity,” first of all. As administrator general I tried to stay close to the personnel. This may be less of a problem in great libraries in the United States, where library employees are better paid. But in an institution as fragile as the Bibliothèque Nationale it was necessary to have an administrator who “showed up” and was available to people. And if we succeeded in having “social peace,” it may have been due to what my collaborators and I succeeded in doing.

PA: So you didn’t limit your role to that of High Civil Official?

ELRLD: No, I remembered the village community I had been brought up in, and I treated the Bibliothèque Nationale community like a village. I may have been a bit paternalistic in my methods. In any case the main entrance of the BN is an excellent place to meet people. That large vestibule was a stroke of genius on the part of the architect who designed the building.

This being said, I wasn’t much impressed by the political class I had to deal with, especially the socialists under whom I served, or by those who succeeded them. These politicians are very difficult to reach. They live in a closed circle, and they have truly little consideration for intellectuals, whom they pretend to respect only if they need them.

PA: Is this a characteristic of the political class on the right as well as on the left? I mean giving intellectuals consideration only if you need them?

ELRLD: Absolutely. They have an “instrumental” view of the intellectual. I don’t know what it’s like in the United States, but the political class here in France is cut off from the people, haughty, arrogant. Allow me to quote this text from Beowulf. This is from Hrothgar’s speech to Beowulf apropos of the fall of heroes through the sin of arrogance:
It is always a wonder in His full understanding their wisdom of mind, He rules everything. a high-born heart gives a man holdings, stronghold of nobles, great tracts of land, that lacking true wisdom his rule at an end. from feast to feast. from illness, age, darkens his mind, sharpen its blade, turns to his pleasure. until, within him, begins to increase, the soul’s shepherd. bound up in cares; who shoots his bow Then he is hit in the heart, with the bitter arrow, of the wicked demon, Too brief it seems, Angry and covetous, to honor his men.47

how God the Almighty deals out to men their lands, nobility. Sometimes He lets travel far in delight, joy of his birthright, puts in his control such wide kingdoms he cannot imagine Happily he lives No thought of harm or malicious tongues nor does conflict anywhere but the whole world He knows no worse his portion of arrogance when his guardian sleeps, Too sound is that sleep, the killer very near with treacherous aim. struck under helmet the dark commands and he knows no defense. that long time he ruled. he gives no rings

PA: So French politicians “give no rings to honor their men”? 

ELRLD: They have no sense of reciprocity. They “give no rings to honor their men.” By the way, the Old English for “portion of arrogance” is “ofer-hygda.” I had many an occasion to see “ofer-hygda” at work in men like Mitterand and Balladur.48

47. As was the case for his quotation from La Bruyère (n. 46), Le Roy Ladurie interrupted the interview to fetch a book from his personal library and read from it. The quotation is taken from Beowulf: A Dual Language Edition, translated and with an introduction and commentary by Howell D. Chickering Jr. (Dover: Anchor Books, 1977), 149–50, ll. 1725–50.

48. Born in 1916, François Mitterand was president of the French Republic...
PA: Is it a form of hubris?

ELRLD: You might call it that. I must say that that was a relatively interesting lesson I learned from those years. My political ideas had been shaped long before, but the lesson was clear. Whether these people are in power or in the opposition they’re always equally impossible, or at least very difficult, to reach. In spite of this I remain genuinely committed to democracy. It would be interesting to see how things function in Washington. Of course, America isn’t as centralized as France.

PA: Since you’ve mentioned America several times, let me ask you a couple of final questions about your experiences in American universities. You have taught extensively in America, you have been a guest of the Western Studies Program at Cornell, and I’m sure you are aware of the “culture wars,” one aspect of which is an attack by the left on what is considered the excessively Eurocentric character of traditional courses in the humanities.

Do you think, to begin with, that the very notion of a historical survey or program entitled “Western Civilization,” or “Western Studies” is a dated, reactionary concept? Can it have any pedagogical value for the undergraduate?

ELRLD: I think it is a remarkable notion. In France, for example, students have been too enclosed within French culture. It has perhaps been the same in England, Germany, or Italy, I’m not sure. Some educators have wanted national boundaries to “explode,” to obtain a transnational view of education that would include America, or Europe taken as an entirety. I find that a remarkable thing, I mean to make national boundaries “explode.” So I don’t find the idea of “Western Studies” reactionary. On the contrary.

from 10 May 1981 to 17 May 1995 (he died 8 January 1996). Mitterand appointed Le Roy Ladurie administrator general of the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1986. Edouard Balladur (b. 1931), who entered politics as a protégé of former President Georges Pompidou (d. 1974), has been regularly elected to parliament on the conservative ticket. He served as Mitterand’s prime minister after the conservative parliamentary victory of 1993 and was defeated in his bid for the presidency in the May 1995 presidential election.
The idea of a “Western” approach such as you find it in America is far better than the nationalistic approach which, unfortunately, has too often characterized European education. The idea of “Western” civilization is based not on a reactionary ideology but on a very stimulating, if sometimes naive ideology of progress.

If you favor a “non-Western” approach to education to favor the learning of other great civilizations—Chinese, or Islamic, for example—that is an arguable notion, although you can’t learn everything at once. But if it’s to argue that the memoirs of a Guatemalan peasant, or of an obscure American feminist from Minnesota in 1880 is a cultural “fact” as important as any other, I find that grotesque. In French culture it’s the same thing. To give equal footing to the most prodigious works of French culture and to some obscure production from the French-speaking Pacific islands is something I can’t agree with.

PA: Can one consider oneself a “cultural pluralist” and still hold to the idea of “Western civilization”?

ELRLD: What I liked about the “Western civilization” idea was that it was nonprovincial. American universities are the least provincial in the world, intellectually speaking. They have been characterized by a prodigious openness, by the greatly varied specializations of their scholars, by their “secular” character and their openness to many currents of thought: Marxist, feminist, gay-lesbian, etc. I believe this nonprovincial character of the American university should be maintained, and that we should remind ourselves that the idea of Western civilization was a sign of that openness.

PARIS, 3 MAY 1995
Gustav Stickley and Irene Sargent: United Crafts and *The Craftsman*

**BY CLEOTA REED**

**Gustav Stickley**'s monthly journal, *The Craftsman*, stands as the single most important American publication to emerge from the Arts and Crafts movement. From its first number in October 1901 to its demise in 1916, it explained the international foundations of the movement to a broad audience, engendered interest in the movement's material products, and emphasized the inclusive, democratic spirit that distinguished the American movement from its British parent. Following and enlarging on the social and aesthetic precepts of William Morris, this handsomely designed and finely printed magazine elevated the status of the decorative arts in America by providing them with a theoretical basis, grounded in political as well as social thought, and offering them as measures of a progressive culture. *The Craftsman* gave serious attention to domestic architecture, furnishings, gardening, costume, and fine crafts, including pottery, textiles, baskets, metalwork, jewelry, and stained glass, as arts of significance in a democratic society. The magazine quickly gained an audience of intelligent, educated, middle-class readers and helped them to see that the Arts and Crafts movement was as much about ideas as about objects. It encouraged them to seek what the Philadelphia architect William Price had described as "the art that is life." Perhaps no other magazine of small

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(or, at best, modest) circulation had such a profound and enduring impact on how home-owning Americans of the early twentieth century thought about their dwellings. There has been nothing like it since.¹

One of the more remarkable aspects of *The Craftsman* and its success was that it came into being and flourished without help from the publishing industry. The two people who conceived, launched, and carried it to rapid success could claim no significant prior experience in publishing. Moreover, they had little in common beyond their belief in the ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement. The magazine’s publisher, Gustav Stickley, was a furniture manufacturer of little formal education but growing aspirations to be a person of cultural importance. His colleague in bringing *The Craftsman* into being was Irene Sargent, a woman of great learning who had just begun her distinguished career as a university teacher of Romance languages and the history of art and architecture. Stickley, emboldened by the success of his United Crafts furniture manufacturing operation in Eastwood, New York (now part of Syracuse), had much to gain by bringing such a journal into being, but he had neither the literary background nor the editorial skills (let alone the time) to produce a first-class monthly publication by himself. Sargent provided what he needed. According to tradition, Stickley had first sought her out for French lessons before sailing to Europe in 1898. A tradition also suggests that she may have accompanied him as a guide on that trip, but there seems to be no evidence for either claim. Their relationship was, in any event, always professional and never social.²

Sargent began writing for Stickley by January 1901, ten months

¹ A complete run of *The Craftsman* can be seen in Syracuse University Library’s Department of Special Collections. Wendy Kaplan titled her book *The Art that Is Life* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987) after the subtitle of Price’s periodical *The Artsman*, finding in it a summary expression of the ideals underlying the Arts and Crafts movement.

prior to her work for *The Craftsman*. A four-thousand-word manuscript, titled ‘*A Revival of Old Arts and Crafts*’ and dated 13 January 1901, survives in her papers at Syracuse University, written rapidly in her own hand in a small writing tablet. Virtually verbatim, but with its title altered to ‘*A Revival of Old Arts and Crafts in Wood and Leather*’, her essay constitutes the text for Stickley’s first publication, *Chips from the Workshops of Gustave [sic] Stickley*. With the date 1901 printed on the verso of its brown wove-paper cover, this profusely illustrated, twenty-eight-page pamphlet/catalog appeared sometime between January and June of that year. The number of copies printed must have been quite small, for only a few can now be located. Sargent received remuneration for her contribution, but no byline. ³

Sargent’s article explicates the historical and the aesthetical basis for Stickley’s United Crafts. On the first page she quotes Thomas Carlyle, that “ornament is the first spiritual need of the barbarous man.” She then traces the arts of ornament selectively through the ages and brings them up to the present, specifically to the new United Crafts furniture line, describing in some detail the company’s adherence to “the ideals of honesty of materials, solidarity of construction, utility, adaptability to place, and aesthetic effect,” ending with this statement:

> In thus providing comfort or convenience, assuring utility, and securing thorough construction, harmony of line and refinement of color, in every object that leaves our workshop, we [the workers of United Crafts] feel that we fulfil our duty as artists and craftsmen; that we are working for a definite and high purpose: that is, the improvement of the public taste; that we are putting forth our personal efforts to realize the meaning of an art developed by the people, for the people, as a reciprocal joy for the maker and the user.⁴

³. Irene Sargent Papers, Syracuse University Archives. Stickley’s ledger from 1901 to 1905, now in the Winterthur Library, indicates that he paid Sargent $50 on 30 December 1900. In addition, he also paid her a total of $625 for her work in 1901. (Stickley Ledger, Joseph Downs Collection 60, V.76.X101, Winterthur Library).

⁴. Irene Sargent, *Chips from the Workshops of Gustave [sic] Stickley* (1901).
Earlier in the essay, Sargent had made clear the historical precedents for this new furniture, not for its visible style so much as its principles of design and its avoidance of ostentation.

Now, if it be true, as it has been asserted, that no designer, however original he may be, can sit down today and draw the form of an ordinary piece of furniture, or vessel, or the ornament of a cloth, that will be other than a development, or a degradation of forms used hundreds of years ago, where shall the middle class individual seek the objects that
shall best express his station in life and his own individuality, and best respond to his daily needs? The answer comes quickly. He must seek them among his social and political forebears; among the belongings of the burghers and the yeomen who prepared the way for the democracy of modern times. In the extant examples of the household art of medieval Germany and the Tyrol, of France and Flanders, of the England of the Puritans, he will find the qualities which are adapted to his uses: Good design, sound construction, sobriety, and subserviency of ornament. He has but to create the demand for objects possessing these qualities; since designers and makers well-instructed in this art and craft, stand ready to produce a new household art which shall justify its name.

The “well-instructed” designers and makers who stood ready to supply this furniture were, of course, the workers of Stickley’s United Crafts.

Sargent’s design principles and Stickley’s manufactures both reacted against Victorian taste, especially against the sense of clutter and the often overwrought appearance of that era’s furniture and decorative objects. As Sargent moves in her essay from room to room in an ideal home, she states the principles that should now apply, but she never proselytizes. She abjures Victorian ornament while specifying which pieces of the new era’s clean-lines furniture, such as those available from United Crafts, should be used to achieve better effect. About dining rooms, she wrote:

[N]o article should be admitted that literally does not earn its living: that is, render some actual service to the frequenter of the room. Here especially, the tendency to crowd and multiply the furnishings should be avoided, as there is no surer means of destroying the decorative value of the separate pieces, and of defeating their purpose as useful articles. Free space is in itself an ally of the decorator, and, in the dining room, it becomes a first essential; both for the comfort of the guests and the convenience of the servants, who, if crowded among buffets, china-cabinets,
chairs and tables, require the dexterity of a gypsy in the egg-dance to avoid breakage and disaster. . . . It is easy for the rich man to furnish his dining-room in baronial splendor, but it is possible for the man of the middle class to offer hospitality to his friends amid surroundings equally tasteful, although simple and comparatively inexpensive. This he may do by avoiding the eruptive carving, the applied ornament, [and] the unrefined moldings which have hitherto characterized much of the furniture offered as "stylish pieces" in the shops.

In June 1901 Stickley followed *Chips from the Workshops of Gustave Stickley* with another pamphlet, identical to the first except for a title altered to *Chips from the Workshops of United Crafts* and the addition of several tipped-in photographs of United Crafts furniture. Sargent and Stickley may then have decided that a journal would be more effective in broadcasting the ideas and the spirit of the Arts and Crafts movement to America, and thereby engendering a greater appreciation for his furniture, for they soon turned their attention to the creation of *The Craftsman*. In 1916 Stickley recalled this moment but did not give Sargent, or anyone else, credit for contributing to the magazine's beginning.

I did not realize at the time that in making those few pieces of strong, simple furniture, I had started a new movement. Others saw it and prophesied a far-reaching development. To me it was only furniture; to them it was religion. And eventually it became religion with me as well. Thus unconsciously a Craftsman style was evolved and developed, a style that gradually found its way into the homes of the people, pushing out a branch here, a branch there, first in one direction and then in another, wherever it met with sympathy and encouragement. . . . The next thing that nat-

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5. The second 1901 *Chips* with tipped-in photographs was accompanied by an order form dated 23 June 1901. I am grateful to David Cathers for sorting out the early issues of *Chips* for me. His book, *Furniture of the American Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: New American Library, 1981), is an important work on that subject.
urally suggested itself was the need of a broader medium of expression for these ideas of craftsmanship and home-making; the need of some definite, organized plan for reaching people who, I felt sure, would be interested in what I was trying to accomplish; some means of getting into direct communication with them, of entering, so to speak, into their very homes. And so, in October [1901], the Craftsman Movement sent forth another branch, full of hope and promise—the first number of THE CRAFTSMAN Magazine. . . .

The first number of *The Craftsman* appeared 1 October 1901. We do not know how Sargent and Stickley shared the responsibilities of getting out the magazine. He never identified any editor during its Syracuse years. He signed only a very few articles himself, and hardly any of the editorial matter. He owned the magazine, and certainly approved everything that appeared in it, but planning, obtaining and editing manuscripts, designing and proofing monthly numbers, as well as overseeing in-house printing, required a great investment of time and thought, and Stickley was a prodigiously busy man with many irons in the fire. Sargent took on the daunting task of writing a few articles of real substance and national interest each month and solicited and edited the contributions of others. She wrote less as she and Stickley found more contributors, but less time writing meant more time editing. The magazine had a consistently high literary tone, and it was consistently her tone: dignified, precise, learned, elegant in its prose style, and quick-witted in its scholarship. When she began writing for *The Craftsman* in 1901, she was nearly fifty (but claimed to be thirty-nine!). Stickley was forty-four.

Of old New England lineage (though she had been born and raised in Auburn, New York), Sargent received her formal education in Boston and Cambridge. A tradition exists that she studied first at the Boston Conservatory of Music, but if so, her interest in the history of the visual arts and their place in culture soon took precedence, and she turned to Harvard University. Harvard did

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not permit women to enroll for courses in those days, but some professors allowed women of exceptional qualifications to audit lectures informally, and this seems to be what Sargent did. Later in her life she reported that she had studied at Harvard with Charles Eliot Norton. Norton, a friend of both John Ruskin and William Morris, and America’s first great teacher of the history and theory of art and architecture, became a central figure in the early development of the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States.

In the 1880s, Sargent traveled extensively in Europe, taking time to audit lectures at the Sorbonne and the University of Rome. She was fluent in five languages. She began teaching French at Syracuse University in 1895, though she did not have a full-time continuing appointment until 1901. She also taught French, Italian, and Spanish at the Syracuse Classical School, a children’s day school, from 1901 to 1904. (Her other languages were Latin and German.) She had published on the poetry of Robert Browning and lectured on a variety of subjects to many civic and cultural organizations, but nothing in her earlier experiences suggested how prolific an author she would become when she joined Stickley in the adventure of creating The Craftsman.

Sargent’s literary contributions to The Craftsman still seem impressive, not only in number but also in range of subjects. In 1901 she wrote all the articles in the first two monthly numbers, more than eighty printed pages. In these she set forth the ideals of Morris and Ruskin, and linked Stickley’s fast-growing empire inexorably to the Arts and Crafts movement. Thereafter, other authors contributed, though she usually wrote the lead article, which set the theme for the number. In the magazine’s first six months, from October 1901 to March 1902, she contributed twenty-six of the thirty-three signed features. During her three and a half years with The Craftsman, she made eighty-four signed contributions to the magazine, and others, unsigned. She ended her association with The Craftsman magazine in April 1905, when Stickley left the Craftsman Building and moved his offices (but not his factory) to New York City.

It is unclear why Sargent did not continue her association with

7. Irene Sargent Papers, Syracuse University Archives.
Stickley after he relocated. A letter that she wrote on 22 February 1905 to a Boston art educator, Henry Turner Bailey, explains a little, but raises other questions too. She said:

As you have very kindly given me proof of your interest, both publicly and personally, I write to tell you of my decision to sever my connection with *The Craftsman*. My resignation will take effect on the issue of the April number. New *departures* are planned for the magazine which appear to me neither wise nor desirable, and my New England blood gives me sufficient obstinacy to resist them, perhaps even against my own interests. My classes in the University occupy only a few hours of my time, and I am anxious to continue writing. If, therefore, you learn of any publication or person desirous of obtaining articles upon the subjects which I am able to treat, or translations from the French, German, Italian, or Spanish, will you keep me in mind and recommend me as far as you are able.\(^8\)

In saying that her classes occupied only a few hours of her time, she probably dealt in understatement. What “departures” would Sargent have objected to? The magazine did not look radically different in the months after her separation from it, though it began to contain more articles per number. A gradual change in emphasis in its contents from historical perspectives to modern events was already underway, however. A review from the *New York Tribune* about the March 1905 number confirms this:

The current number of *The Craftsman* is full of interesting and timely articles on applied arts and kindred topics. There has lately been a distinct advance evident in this magazine, which is losing more and more its character of a trade paper picked out with essays on the arts of other days, and is taking its place as a lively exponent of the modern arts and crafts movement.\(^9\)

\(^8\) Irene Sargent to Henry Turner Bailey, 22 February 1905, University of Oregon Library. My thanks to James O’Gorman for calling this letter to my attention.

\(^9\) An excerpt from this review was reprinted in *The Craftsman* 8 (April 1905).
As soon as she ceased writing for Stickley’s magazine in 1905, she began publishing regularly on historical and contemporary fine crafts in *The Keystone*, a widely distributed and well respected journal of the optical, jewelry, and watch trade. She contributed to other journals as well, publishing, in all, well over two hundred historical and critical pieces, translations, reviews, and poems.\(^{10}\) During all of these years her writing and editorial work amounted to an avocation. Her primary responsibilities were as professor of the history of fine arts (including architecture) and Italian literature in Syracuse University’s College of Fine Arts. Here too she was exceptional, reaching the rank of professor by 1908, and receiving honorary degrees from the University in 1911 (Litt.M.) and 1922 (Litt.D.). She taught until her death in 1930, at age eighty.

Some insights into Sargent’s days with *The Craftsman* come from the Rochester architect Claude Bragdon (1866–1946). In 1902 he married Charlotte Coffyn Wilkinson of Syracuse. Her brother, Henry W. Wilkinson (1870–1931), was himself an architect. The two young architects, who were friends, each had a brief association with *The Craftsman*. Both were enthralled by the possibilities of designing houses and domestic furnishings. Bragdon had trained in the office of Charles Ellis in Rochester; Charles Ellis’s enormously talented brother Harvey came to Syracuse to work for Stickley as a designer in 1903. Bragdon’s letters give us first-hand reports on Wilkinson, Sargent, Ellis, and Stickley from the editorial offices of *The Craftsman*.

On 27 December 1900, Bragdon wrote to his mother that his brother-in-law to be, Wilkinson, was employed at a furniture factory that was a long walk from downtown Syracuse. Bragdon wrote:

> This morning I walked six miles [round trip] to the furniture factory where Harry is working. Harry gets one hun-

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dred dollars a week for his services. . . . Harry has made a great success with his furniture and some of it is certainly very beautiful. It made me ambitious to try something on the same lines.\textsuperscript{11}

Wilkinson was working for Stickley at his factory in Eastwood at the same time that Sargent began writing for him. Wilkinson received $700 for his efforts. In view of the amount of money he earned, he must have had important assignments. If he indeed designed furniture for Stickley, then he probably also made the skillfully rendered drawings for the nearly thirty illustrations of furniture and domestic settings that appeared in the 1901 \textit{Chips}.\textsuperscript{12}

Two and a half years later, beginning on 18 July 1903, Bragdon began a series of letters to his mother,\textsuperscript{13} all written from the Craftsman Building in downtown Syracuse, an imposing Queen Anne structure of 1893, originally designed as a private residence by the distinguished Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell. Bragdon wrote on the United Crafts letterhead. In his first letter he mentions that he has been observing Harvey Ellis as work:

I write this as you see from the United Crafts. I’ve just had a chat with Harvey who’s the same old Harvey, making the same old beautiful water colors in the same old maddeningly simple and easy way. (18 July 1903)

I see Harvey every day. I come to this quiet place [the editorial room] to write letters at a beautiful Stickley desk. . . .

\textsuperscript{11} Claude Bragdon Family Papers, University of Rochester, Rush Rhees Library. I thank Jean France for calling my attention to Claude Bragdon’s letters.

\textsuperscript{12} Stickley Ledger, Winterthur Library. The ledger is unclear as to whether Wilkinson worked in 1900 or 1901 for this fee. Wilkinson, who graduated in 1890 from Cornell University’s School of Architecture, moved in 1901 from Syracuse to New York, where he established himself in the practice of architecture. He remained in New York and New Jersey the rest of his life. One of his early projects was the former Central New York Telephone and Telegraph Company building at 311 Montgomery Street, now the Onondaga Historical Association.

\textsuperscript{13} The letters from Claude Bragdon to his mother are from the Bragdon Papers at the University of Rochester.
I’m writing an article for Stickley which I hope to finish tomorrow. Miss Sargent praised my first article very highly and said I ought to give up architecture for literature [as in time he did]. Fancy! (21 July 1903)

Four days later, he wrote:

Mr. Stickley wants another illustration at once and I’ve promised to do it this morning. . . . I want to stay through next week. I’m enjoying everything and working a little at the same time. Mr. Stickley liked my first article very much and asked me to do still another. I told him “I’d think about it.” (25 July 1903)

[Harvey] is working very hard and looks worn and old, but he’s doing great stuff, as good as he has done in his life. The influence of Stickley is just what it should be—it subdues and chastens Harvey’s naturally riotous fancy. He’s designing a series of covers for the Craftsman. The next number, containing my article and 22 of Harvey’s drawings (badly reproduced) will be out Tuesday or Wednesday, and I’ll send you a copy. Since I’ve been here I’ve written another, about a little house, and made one drawing in addition to the two I brought from home. Monday I’m going to make another, and Stickley is talking now about an article more in the vein of the first one. If he pays 2 cents a word as he agreed about the first one, it’s really worth my while to do this, and it’s good advertising as well. I guess I told you Wilkinson and Magonigle got two jobs from a little house of theirs published in the Craftsman. (26 July 1903)

Mr. Stickley today gave Char and I a beautiful little desk for our guest room in green oak. It was marked $27.00 and is about the prettiest thing I’ve seen. He’s evidently disposed to be nice to me. I gave him a $500 order from the country club the other day and he likes my work in the Craftsman. (1 August 1903)

Finally, on 11 August, Bragdon wrote from Albany, having just left Syracuse:
In Sizzycuse I saw old Harvey who was working on a stunning poster for *The Craftsman*, and Miss Sargent who promised to give me a decision on another article I sent them very soon.

The success of *The Craftsman* in its first six months brought it a steadily growing number of other contributors. Sargent herself had covered an impressive variety of subjects in its first numbers, from an analysis of Gilbert and Sullivan’s satirization of the Aesthetic movement in their comic opera *Patience*, to a discussion of the hand-weaving of rugs in contemporary Ireland; from the Arts and Crafts movement’s abiding interest in handicraft as an agent of social reform, to reviews of books on architecture pertinent to the movement. Stickley contributed to these early issues as well, mostly short pieces on precepts of good design, on color, on the virtues of furniture of the kind he made, and other subjects. These statements served his interests as a manufacturer, of course, but they also reflected the genuineness of his commitment to the movement’s ideals.

Among the other authors who appeared in the journal, Mary Woolman wrote on London’s Haslemere handicraft workshops for women, Mrs. H. W. Graham on traditional crafts in Kentucky, and Edwin Markham on the influence of California missions on late-nineteenth-century architecture. The tone of all *The Craftsman* articles was serious, erudite, and uplifting. This tone distinguished the journal from the larger-circulation, less academic, popular magazines of its time that also responded to the Arts and Crafts movement, such as *House Beautiful*, *Studio*, and *Ladies Home Journal*. Of all these, *The Craftsman* conveys most clearly to later generations the altruism of those who took the Arts and Crafts movement not merely as a body of abstract ideas, or as a source for style in furnishings, but as nothing less than a reform of how Americans lived their lives. Sargent’s unpublished essay of 1901 contained the germ of much of this thought.

Just as Sargent in 1901 had preceded her work on *The Craftsman* with a long essay in *Chips* considering the historical precedents for Stickley’s “reform” furniture, so too did she follow it—long
after—with a similar essay. In 1926, eleven years after the collapse of Stickley’s Craftsman empire and the passing from fashion of the furniture that others came to call “Mission Style”—a term he did not use—Sargent wrote a long essay for a little-known sixty-one-page booklet, titled *Household Furniture: Its Origin from the Bed and the Chest*, for the L. & J. G. Stickley Company in Fayetteville, New York, a firm founded by two of Gustav’s brothers, who had become his successful competitors. By then Gustav’s contributions as a designer and manufacturer were part of history. Near the end of her essay about the historical evolution of furniture styles, she reassessed what she now called “straight line” furniture, furniture of the kind that Stickley had been making during *The Craftsman* years, and which his brothers had also manufactured. She said that the style had come about naturally and inevitably in response to the requirements of an advanced democratic society. In 1926, however, a quarter of a century after having helped launch the magazine, and when the Craftsman style had fallen from fashion, she put “straight line” furniture into an interesting perspective:

Its austerity was softened by the beauty of its substance and of its surface treatment. But it was massive to excess, it gave the impression of inertia, and was well capable of provoking a disinclination to move and to think in the minds of those subjected to its influence. In its effort to reveal structure, to be frank and simple in expression, it allowed one member to pierce another almost fiercely and permitted an aggressive display of stout wooden pins which made ungraceful projections along the course of the uprights. Furthermore, regarded as a whole, this style carried the impersonal quality to an extreme. It suggested no descent from preceding types and pointed toward no probable developments in the future. It appeared to lack relationship with continuous, progressive life, and therefore, seemed less well placed in private residences than in fine clubhouses and at other points of select assembly, where its soothing color and delightful finish first greeted the eye and the
This photograph accompanied Irene Sargent’s obituary in the *Syracuse Journal* of 14 September 1932.

touch, and the short duration of the visit prevented the analysis or even the perception of its irritating finality. . . . Its most intelligent champion was Mr. Gustave [sic] Stickley, now retired.14

At the time, the retired Stickley lived in Syracuse. Whether he had any part to play in the development of this booklet is doubtful. Perhaps he did not even see this reconsidered appraisal of his reform furniture by the writer who had assessed them so differently a quarter of a century earlier, who had worked with him to create *The Craftsman*, and who now saluted him.

An Interview with Thomas Moore

BY ALEXANDRA EYLE

INTRODUCTION BY DAVID L. MILLER

When Tom Moore was a graduate student in Syracuse University's Department of Religion in the early 1970s, he was interested in ancient Greco-Roman mythology, Neoplatonic philosophy, and Italian Renaissance astrology and musicology, as well as global religions and depth psychology. He had come to us with a background in Roman Catholic spirituality, and he had a talent for languages. While living in Skytop housing, Tom built a harpsichord, which he played beautifully.

I remember him as an exceptional student, and one who had a wonderful collegiality with his peers. He listened very well. When with him, I never felt that he had an agenda that he wanted to impose on me or that he was himself stuck in. His openness was stunning, but for all that he was not less critical.

I introduced Tom to the thought of the post-Jungian archetypal psychologist James Hillman. He learned from Hillman what I think he already knew in an intuitive way: that pathology can be learned from, that neuroses—whether individual or collective—may have a purpose, that one can understand a great deal by asking what symptoms and sufferings want. This understanding makes Tom's work so different from pop psychology, New Age, and self-help litera-

David L. Miller is the Watson-Leddon Professor of Religion at Syracuse University and was, with Stanley Romaine Hopper, one of the directors of Thomas Moore’s doctoral study while he was at Syracuse University. Professor Miller teaches in the areas of mythology, psychology, and literary theory in relation to religion. He is the author of more than sixty articles and book chapters and seven books, the most recent being Jung and the Interpretation of the Bible.

Alexandra Eyle is a Syracuse University alumna and free-lance writer who specializes in profiles, especially about writers. For the Paris Review she has interviewed the French “new novelist” Claude Simon and the poet W. D. Snodgrass. She has also written a biography of the forester and conservationist Charles Lathrop Pack.
ture, which is often eager to fix us, to save us from the darkness and messiness of life.

Tom’s work in his best-selling books, *Care of the Soul* and *Soul Mates*, is affirmative without promising sweetness and light. He does not promote impossible expectations which, when we ineluctably fail at them, produce shame, guilt, and anxiety. Tom writes, in *Care of the Soul*: “If we deny or cover up anything that is at home in the soul, then we cannot be fully present to others. Hiding the dark places results in a loss of soul; speaking for them and from them offers a way toward genuine community and intimacy.”

In a way Tom has not completely wandered away from his Catholic background and experience. His secular works have a confessional feel and function about them. This was already true in his earlier books, *The Music of the Spheres* and *Dark Eros*. There is a deep spirituality about Tom’s work.

What people seem to think they need and want today is more spirit. This is like saying that what a university needs is school spirit or that what a country needs is national spirit. But spirit in either the ethereal religious sense or in the rah-rah college or political sense divides rather than unites. It is my college against yours, or my country against yours.

Tom’s notion of spirituality is more like Jack Gilbert’s poem:

> The spirit dances, comes and goes. But the soul is nailed to us like lentils and fatty bacon lodged under the ribs. What lasted is what the soul ate.

Tom’s soulful kind of spirit sticks to the ribs. It has to do with body. I think that is what makes Tom’s books best sellers. People feel the authority in the writing. It sounds real.

This is where Tom has carried on beyond James Hillman’s insights. Hillman had clearly distinguished soul and spirit. But Tom reimagined spirit, not in the airy way, but in the manner of soul. This is Tom’s originality: to add psychological depth and a sense of body to spirituality, and to add a reimagined spirituality to archetypal psychology.

Such an integrated vision comes as a solace and a help for the banality and boredom that so many persons experience today in
work, marriage, parenting, religion, television, and in the many other aspects of everyday life. This life lived without imagination is spoken to directly, but without accusation, in Tom’s writings. He makes an end run around our literalisms, our fundamentalisms, and our political correctnesses. Tom already addressed this need directly in an early book, *Imagination and Rituals of Imagination*.

Above all, Tom can communicate complex and deep matters in ways that are accessible. He is a teacher in his writing. Like the nineteenth-century existentialist philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, Tom knows that in order to overcome resistances and habituated ideas, good pedagogy has often to “wound from behind.” So in reading those teachers who know such a craft one finds that, before one knows it, one has been changed.

To say that Tom communicates well and that he knows the art of teaching may make him sound like a popularizer. This is not at all the case. It is rather that Tom refuses the conventional notion that there are some people who are thinkers and then there are the rest of us. Tom assumes, with Aristotle and others, that all people are thinkers and that they are thinking all of the time, even and perhaps especially when they don’t think that they are. It is just that there are different vocabularies and lexicons, different modes of expression.

I think that the harpsichord and the music are a key. Tom writes about difficult matters well, and he teaches deep ideas well because he has a musical ear. He listens with imagination, and he thinks the same way. So Tom writes: “If we could feel the seriousness of our own imagination, we wouldn’t need rationalizations in order to make life decisions without guilt, and our decisions wouldn’t feel so incomplete if we made them soulfully, granting authority to the intuitions and expressions that come to us from within.”

From the music of the spheres to the dark depths of the hurtful psyche, Tom writes soul-music.
An Interview with Thomas Moore

AE: How do you account for the success of your books *Care of the Soul* and *Soul Mates*.¹ What have they touched?

TM: I’m not too sure. I hope it’s because people are finally seeing through the formulas that so many popular psychology books are giving them. A lot of these books that look new are restating the same old paradigm over and over again, looking for the fatal flaw and the one solution. They are blaming the “dysfunctional” family for the ultimate flaw. I think that flaw’s a mystery. It’s not a problem we’re going to solve. Theology says it’s original sin. I think that makes a lot more sense. There is inherent in our nature an imperfection.

AE: What sort of responses do you get from readers?

TM: I get about a dozen letters a week. A lot of people say that the books do not give them new ideas so much as affirm what they are already doing. For instance, they could be making more money but they don’t because they are doing something that really matters to them. People are sending me art pieces, slides, books of art, almost all of them having to do with ordinary things, because people are picking up this theme that soul is made or found in the most ordinary, simple things of life, the things we overlook, and that paying attention to these things is the way of restoring soul.

AE: Clearly you’re touching people. You must feel good about that.

¹. Thomas Moore, psychotherapist and author, earned his Ph.D. at Syracuse University in 1975. He has given the University Library’s Department of Special Collections signed first editions of his books.

The interview took place in the spring of 1994, at Moore’s house outside of Amherst, Massachusetts. It formed the basis for Eyle’s profile of Moore, “Soul Man,” which appeared in the fall 1994 number of *Syracuse University Magazine*.

TM: I do. Just last night I was in Northampton and spoke to 500 people at a church and afterwards signed lots and lots of books. I love hearing people’s stories, what they’re doing, how they respond—full of appreciation. I write some books, and people invite me to come and talk to them. I’m not a terribly social person. I’m kind of retiring and private, so it’s like a ticket to be in the world more.

AE: Even before *Care of the Soul* entered the world there was a resurgence of interest in mythology, thanks in large part to Joseph Campbell. Why is mythology so popular?

TM: I really don’t know. But everywhere I go people tell me they’re hungry for something. The word hungry appears over and over again. They’re hungry for language, ideas, and images that have enough depth to touch whatever the word soul represents. Our psychological language is not profound; it is mechanistic language for the most part, structural language. Our images on television and in the movies are superficial. They don’t give us an opening into the kind of imagination that moves the heart and offers deep reflection. And, these days, the arts are so personalistic that we can’t find there the images that are big enough for us. Everyone is always talking about the personal biography and the intentions of the artist. But that is not deep enough. I read a lot of film scripts before they’re made into films. I see wonderful scripts. But Hollywood transforms them back into the formula, over and over again. As a result, as a country anyway, we are plagued by superficial imagery and language. So Campbell comes along and presents the mythology of the world, and suddenly we’re dealing with imagery that really has some guts. And it doesn’t take much. All you need to do is present it and suggest that mythology has some meaning in everyday life, and suddenly that’s pretty potent. I’m following up on that suggestion, certainly, but I don’t do it the way that Joseph Campbell did it.

AE: How are you different?

TM: He was interested in presenting stories from all over the place. What he didn’t do was take those stories very far.

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AE: Your approach goes beyond mythology?

TM: Yes.

AE: How does your therapeutic approach differ from the Jungian approach, which uses mythology and archetype?

TM: First of all, mythology is not really at the heart of what I do. I never talked mythology in my therapy hours; I never said, “This must be the myth you’re living.” I deal with the dreams, images, and stories that are given. In my writing I use Greek mythology because I know it. It helps me to have a strong image to work off of.

I’m not interested in the idea, proposed by people who came after Jung, that one has to achieve consciousness through some sort of battle with the unconscious, which is like a great mother holding all things. I’m not trying to help a person individuate. I’m not trying to do anything really but to invite the soul in and let it reveal itself. I notice then that life does take on a deeper level of meaning. Some problems may ease because of the introduction of soul, and certainly there can be a change. But I’m not out to change a personality. I have no way of knowing if that’s going to happen.

AE: So you’re making, as you say, a home, for all the elements, dark and light.

TM: Yes.

AE: Can you tell us a little more about the shadow side? How can you explain to our readers how “a morality adequate to life is one sculpted in the presence of shadow” or how “the psyche serves the soul by allowing it to embrace more and repress less.” I think of Jeffrey Dahmer and say he surely wasn’t repressing anything. This isn’t a goal I want to achieve.

TM: Freud and Jung and all depth psychologists have said that repression fosters acting out. Jeffrey Dahmer was extremely repressed. It is when emotions have been repressed so much and are free floating that we have no control over them, like when a rage

comes over a person and they act out the rage and later say, “What did I do? I was out of my mind.” That acting out results from a total rejection of shadow material. So let’s say you’re feeling rage. Instead of talking about rage, you might explore more integrated and humane forms of anger and talk about being firm in life, having solid grounding, and asserting your own individuality. These mild forms of rage are actually very powerful, more potent than the raw emotion. If you’re going to work more imaginatively with the shadow, you must embrace those things that seem objectionable by imagining them more creatively. Our distaste for certain shadow qualities leads us to reject them. Then, in repression, they remain with us in an autonomous and destructive mode. When you deal with them over time and weave them into your personality and way of life they are not destructive.

AE: You’ve said that you’re not results-oriented, but can you tell me how this has worked itself out with your patients?

TM: I should say first that although my relationship to Jung is not terribly central, I draw upon Jung just as I draw upon Marsilio Ficino,⁴ and Emily Dickinson, and others. But I obviously have this general purpose of offering some guidance to people who want to work with the emotional life, the life of the soul. What I’m saying though is that each individual is so unique that I don’t assume I can know what’s good for anybody. All I can do is hear what is being said and try to enrich and deepen those stories that are being told, whether they are stories about the problems of a person’s life, or dreams, or the family history. I try to hear more than what the person is saying. I try to get the deeper stories—always deeper layers of what is being told. Now when you do that, ultimately you begin to live from a place that is closer to the heart, to what gives meaning. I think part of the problem with us is that we live at a great distance from that place—a distance from soul, you could say. My work is to try to become more intimate with the life of the soul. As a result, there is an increased intimacy with one’s own life, a shift in the level from which you live. A lot of the symptoms may ease as a result.

⁴ Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), known primarily as an Italian Platonic philosopher.
AE: You draw on Marsilio Ficino and James Hillman so much. When you sat down to write, fired up with ideas, what did you need to say that hadn’t been said before? What is it that you, Thomas Moore, say that we won’t find in Ficino or Hillman?

TM: Drawing on others can be a kind of creativity. It’s an appreciation of the past and especially of people you really admire. You take that inheritance and you give it a twist. As we say today, you put a spin on it. And your spin is what counts.

AE: And what is yours?

TM: Well, in relation to Hillman, there are several things. Based on what I know of him, he is not very positive about the spiritual life. He’s giving us an important contribution with his criticisms of spirituality and religion. What I’m doing is trying to offer a way to live a creative spiritual and religious life that does not insult our intelligence, that has psychological sophistication. A lot of times these things are in opposition. I think that’s a major difference between Hillman and myself. I do want to make a positive contribution to the spiritual life.

AE: And Ficino? Not that I’ve read him.

TM: Not many have read him. He was a magus, an astrologer, a musician, a priest, a philosopher, a translator, a Neoplatonist, and an Epicurean. That’s why I’m attracted to him, because I like to be all those things myself. One difference between Ficino and myself is that, at least in the present time, I’m not the mystic that he was. He had a transcendent side that I don’t pick up on much. I might one day. I would like to write a book on religion one day. But at the present time I emphasize the earthier side of his work.

AE: And bring it into modern terms for us.

TM: His language is really very difficult to follow. It takes me forever to translate his Latin. Even if you read a translation of his work, it’s not easy to know what he’s saying or to see how it applies to anything. Yet, I continue to find in his writing a rich and inexhaustible source of insight directly relevant to our concerns.
AE: Let’s talk about your background. Where did you grow up?

TM: In Detroit, with a brother seven years younger, and a very big extended family, lots of uncles, dozens of cousins. My father taught plumbing all his life. My mother is a homemaker who is still very healthy and active.

When I was thirteen I entered a prep school run by the Servite Order, a mendicant order founded in Italy in the thirteenth century. In this order people did not spend their whole lives within the walls of the monastery but worked in parishes and taught and did all kinds of other work as well. The order was a blend of this intense community life—monastic life—with an active life. We meditated for an hour every day, had mass every day, and chanted the office. We wore dark robes, even in high school.

The postulant year, the first year of college, is the year of making application to orders—the full life of the monk—a whole year of seeing whether you want to do this. Then comes the novitiate, when you’re a novice for one year. You don’t leave the monastery grounds. You don’t even read newspapers or anything else. You focus completely on the spiritual life. The following year you take what are called simple vows, of poverty, chastity, and obedience. After a year of that, if you don’t like the life, you can get out very easily. Then after three years you can take what they call solemn vows, which are very difficult to pull out of, like a marriage. I went through all that. I was doing a combined preparation for priesthood plus the monastic track, and I went through solemn vows and even came close to ordination in the priesthood. I had to get approval from Rome to be released from the vows about six months before I would have been ordained a priest.

It was a good leaving, for the most part. The official in charge of my order in the United States came to visit me in my room—a very nice man, a straightforward man. He had been my teacher for three years. He said, “Look, we know each other, and I know what’s going on. You’re going beyond this life somehow. You’re going in another direction. It’s very clear.”

AE: How did your passion for archetypal psychology and Ficino develop?
Marsilio Ficino, from Jean Jacques Boissard (1528–1602), *Bibliotheca chalcographica* (library of engravings of the most outstandingly noble and learned men in all of Europe). The Latin inscription praises Ficino as an interpreter of Plato. The book is owned by Syracuse University Library.
I didn’t know anything about them when I was in monastic life. One of the reasons I left was that I began reading Paul Tillich. I had a very liberal open-minded faculty, and I felt that in certain ways I was educated out of the order. But I had a classical education. It was only at Syracuse that I discovered Ficino. He hadn’t been translated into English. So the first thing I did was take the book of his that was most interesting to me and translate it for myself. That became the basis for my book The Planets Within, which is a complete rewriting of my dissertation. His book, a three-book set, was called Da Vita, On Life, and the title of the book I translated was How to Arrange Your Life According to the Sky.

When you started reading non-Catholic authors in monastic life, was this hard to do?

No. It was a pretty open-minded place. I was also reading Catholic authors like Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit who was a paleontologist and visionary who developed a theology based on evolution. His view was so poetic and far reaching, for me it was the beginning of deliteralizing Christianity. I don’t know what else to call it: deliteralizing. I was reading theology poetically, at more and more levels, seeing the language as applying to ordinary individuals and social experience and not just statements about some theological world that exists outside of us. All of that was important to me in the monastery. It prepared me to read Ficino—

But it prepared you to leave—

It prepared me to leave.

So you left not knowing where you would go?

Not at all. I had studied music since I was in high school. I was writing music, playing, and directing choirs every day. While in the monastery I had studied music at De Paul University in the summers and taken a course or two during the year, so when I left there I was just about ready to get a degree and I did. Then I went to the University of Michigan, thinking I would be a musician the rest of my life. I got a master’s degree in musicology. I wanted to do a doctorate in music and philosophy. I’m still interested in philo-
sophical music of the Middle Ages, but they didn’t see the relevance, so I left. I knew that I wanted to explore things wider than just looking at old musical scores. So I resumed the study of theology.

AE: Someone pointed you to Syracuse.

TM: A professor of mine, Lonnie Kliever, who taught theology at the University of Windsor, told me he thought Syracuse was a place where I could thrive. I wanted to be free to study the arts and religion and psychology all together. So I wrote a letter to David Miller; I think that’s how it worked—oh, and I guess I wrote Gabriel Vahanian. They asked me to write a paper about my ideas on religion, and on the basis of that they gave me a three-year scholarship, without teaching, that included tuition and living expenses. It was great.

AE: So you really found a home, psychologically?

TM: Absolutely. It was a great education for me, exactly what I needed. I couldn’t have asked for anything more than what I got.

AE: Dr. Miller said you were a special student, you had this wonderful classical education, you knew Latin, you had a passion for ideas.

TM: There was another side to it, too. I got there and realized how much I didn’t know. I didn’t know if I’d make it because I found most of my classmates knew literature so much better than I did. I had a classical education, but it was within a Catholic setting—parochial in comparison to the learning of my teachers and classmates at Syracuse.

AE: You hadn’t heard of Hillman yet or Ficino?

TM: No. I had begun reading Jung, but I knew little of his specialized studies. I don’t think I’d ever read a mythological story in my life. I wasn’t one of these people who got myth when he was in

5. Vahanian taught at Syracuse University from 1958 to 1984. He wrote The Death of God (1961), among other books. Both he and Thomas Moore were speakers in the fall of 1995 as part of the Department of Religion’s centennial celebrations.
high school or grade school. When I first went there I took a
course with Stanley Hopper in the poetry of Rilke and Wallace
Stevens. I had to give a presentation and I did such a bad job that
Dr. Hopper told me he didn't know if I would be able to get
through his course. He said, “You’ve got to do something.” So I
gathered my forces and I wrote up a piece for him that he told me
was one of the best things he’d ever read about Wallace Stevens. So
I made a big shift and I got some confidence. But I worked very
hard at Syracuse catching up.

AE: So you left school, started teaching and writing, and eventually
you did that beautiful introduction to James Hillman’s A Blue Fire.

TM: I did that when I moved to New England, while teaching part
time at Lesley College in Boston. One day I had lunch with Hill-
man—we’d been friends for years; I had met him through David
Miller. I’d been reading Jung intensely with David’s guidance and
then he introduced me to one of Hillman’s writings, and I was so
taken by it that I started a correspondence with him while he was
still in Zurich. We discussed doing an anthology of his writings. I
told him I wanted it to be my book and yet completely in accord
with his wishes.

AE: You taught at Glassboro State College for a year and at South-
ern Methodist University for eight years, but were denied tenure.
Why do you think that was? They must be kicking themselves
now. They would have a lot of students wanting to take courses
from you now.

TM: I had a lot of students then. At SMU I taught a very large class
in religion and psychology, but the faculty didn’t seem to like it. It’s
been a mystery to me. I was very interested in opening this area up
to more people. I saw that the department I was in was very small,
and I thought it would be a good idea to open it up to a large num-
ber of people and to teach this material in a rather relaxed way. I
was turning people away when I had 125 people in the course—all
the other classes were very small. For some reason the rest of the
faculty in my department did not appreciate what I was doing. And
I was never able to write in academese. They kept asking me to
write in certain journals and in a certain style, and I tried but I just couldn’t get myself to do it.

AE: In a way that has been to your advantage. As I was reading your books I was noticing the clarity of writing—even when dealing with complexity—and the empathy. You talk at one point of Hillman inserting the third person in first person accounts—

TM: I do the reverse.

AE: David Miller said that what sets you apart from other thinkers and teachers in the area is your ability to communicate.

TM: I would say that’s probably true—and that’s not widely desirable in the academic world. You do have to protect ideas from becoming too personal.

AE: Why?

TM: There’s a possibility of personalizing things in a way that makes all your discussion self-expression, rather than taking the ideas as objects in themselves. There’s a strong spirit in America these days, in the arts especially, to be self-expressive. And I’m working pretty much against that idea. One of my interests is to find ways to present the arts so that they’re not just about self-expression, creativity, and all that, but rather to work with internal, archetypal, mythic ideas or some image that has been around forever that is universal and that doesn’t just have to do with this individual person’s life experience. For example, one could paint about love, to take a big broad topic, and not have to bring your own personal experience into it.

AE: Because love is a big, encompassing thing; we’re in love, encompassed by it—

TM: Yes. It’s not reduced to any individual’s experience. So in that sense I can see a certain validity to the academic position. But I don’t like it myself. The style I’m developing—it’s not terribly conscious—has to do with using language that’s more—this might sound the opposite of what I just said—individual. In my writing I am really trying not to use jargon; I don’t use a lot of psychological
language. I try for the most part to use my own language, words I like that I think are expressive. Instead of “unconscious,” I prefer to use imagination, memory, fantasy, the unknown, the repressed, hidden, out of reach. Instead of abstractions I try to use more descriptive words that give body to the unconscious.

AE: Your editor at HarperCollins, Hugh Van Dusen, told me how Care of the Soul came into being. You had come to their attention when you did the introduction to A Blue Fire. Then your agent submitted your book proposal for auction. When you started that book did you have a clue how successful it would be?

TM: Not really. I thought it might sell more than the other books I’d written: The Planets Within, Rituals of the Imagination, and Dark Eros. Altogether they had sold only 2,000 copies. So I really didn’t believe it would sell a lot. I thought if it sold 30,000 copies I would be deliriously happy, even though that wouldn’t have matched the advance. The only reason I felt the book might do well was because HarperCollins put what for me was a considerable amount of money behind it. Let’s just say it was over $100,000, which was huge to me.

AE: So you knew somebody thought it would sell a lot. How quickly did you write Soul Mates after Care of the Soul?

TM: Very quickly afterwards.

AE: So you hadn’t quite gotten onto the swell of the success of Care of the Soul—or had you?

TM: I wrote it so quickly because it was a natural sequel to Care of the Soul. I really wanted to write it. But I didn’t realize Care of the Soul would have such an impact until probably a year after it was out. Even now it’s a surprise to me when I go on the road and find how many people are reading it, showing up at bookstores to talk about it, and using it in their teaching.

I have had criticisms from writers who don’t seem to get the point of the book. In a major review in the Los Angeles Times, an academic from New York called my work “psychology for the Little House on the Prairie crowd.” Another reporter in a Los Angeles
tabloid wrote almost a parody of what I am. Both of them had the mistaken notion that what I'm doing is kind of middle-class, privileged. They think I'm saying, "Well, if you just get some antiques in your house and buy a really nice door for your home, you'll be taking care of your soul." My interest in caring for home and house and neighborhood and things, the world we live in, they see as an absurd reduction of everything to some very superficial thing. Now that's a huge misreading. I think that what I'm suggesting is quite radical, in an entirely opposite direction. I'm suggesting that we bring together all this transcendent spirituality that seems to have no effect on society and the incredible materialism that surrounds us, which is a kind of a symptomatic, aggressive, obsessive quest for a material world.

Making a soulful life is not a matter of money. It's a matter of imagination. I'm saying that soul is partly in the materials of the world around us. This is very Ficinian, by the way. Ficino says that you're going to attract the spirit of whatever materials you surround yourself with. So if you surround yourself with plastic and polyester, you're going to have a plastic and polyester spirit.

AE: What special objects do you surround yourself with?

TM: Mainly things I'm attached to. A harpsichord. I have some paintings, little sculptures and crosses I've had since my twenties at least that I have around me when I work. I have paintings made by friends—whether I think it's great art or not is beside the point. I have my wife's paintings. All that creates an incredible environment for me. Throughout our house the wood has been carefully done. We painted the house ourselves, picking colors we thought were important to us. We have a Russian icon on a religious theme that's very close to my heart and two or three Buddhas. We have a studio for my wife to paint in and a place for meditation. So all of that goes together to make a place that is not just functional.

AE: What are the important rituals in your life?

TM: To me a very important ritual is family dinner. We say grace every night for the children, that is, a grace that the children can understand. And just being together with the family for dinner is a
ritual that is simple but very important. All the religions I know of have made a sacrament out of eating—the Eucharist. You go to a service in India and there’s food cooking as they’re meditating, and you have the meal afterwards. It’s a very simple thing. Most people do these things. What I’m advocating is doing them more, instead of trying to figure out our marriages and personalities. If we could pay more attention to our rituals, that would be the glue that would hold us together. In Italy, people take a whole day to prepare one dinner. They close down stores for hours every day just to eat lunch. That’s a ritual act. It’s not that they need more calories than we do. You go to Rome, and everyone’s out on the streets at midnight at these little street cafes. In America, no one’s in the streets except people you’d rather not bump into.

AE: How has your life changed?

TM: In lots of ways. I have a family. I didn’t have a family before. My daughter was born when I was 51. I struggled along financially. I’ve never really worried about money, whether I had it or didn’t. Being an assistant professor was not financially rewarding. I never did much there. When I left SMU and private practice I only worked half time. I did that for a number of years. One of the reasons I wanted to write Care of the Soul was that I had experienced all of those ideas in the therapy room. I had practiced therapy in my own way, in a way that I thought was consistent with those ideas. I wanted to write up the two experiences together, the intellectual one and the experience of years of being one-on-one with people. What I’m saying is that my life changed in the sense that I was very private. I lived and worked in a small village west of here, West Stockbridge, and now I am traveling all over the place. I never did that before. I received very few invitations to speak. Now I turn down one a day.

AE: Tell me about your private practice. You don’t have a degree in psychology—how is it one can practice without a degree?

TM: When I was at Syracuse I took my electives in counseling psychology. I had supervision, clinical work. I also had some counseling preparation training when I was in seminary. I didn’t do any
Thomas Moore (© Nicolas Eyle, 1994).
therapy until I went to Texas. There is something called licensed professional counselor in Texas. You don’t have to be a psychologist, but you do have to demonstrate that you have had training and educational background adequate to be licensed as a counselor. So I was licensed. When I came to Massachusetts I didn’t need a license; I kept my Texas license since they are often reciprocal, one state to another. So I just practiced the same way I had always done. Now I don’t practice anymore.

AE: You could make the time, turn down engagements.

TM: I couldn’t write and I couldn’t speak and do television work and all the radio interviews. It’s too much. It’s not just a matter of having an hour free. It’s a weight you carry when you do therapy. You carry people’s lives around with you.

AE: Do you miss it?

TM: Not really.

AE: It seems so integral to you.

TM: It is. But now I’m filling it in with all these other experiences with so many people. Just this month I don’t know how many cities I’ve been in. And people come to me and they’re very open to me, telling me their life stories, and they’re right with me right away. I sign a lot of books wherever I go. So I have conversations one-on-one with people. And all that conversation and all that give and take and meeting people and being intensely connected to various groups around the country more than makes up for the therapy work.

AE: Do you feel as though you’ve become our society’s therapist?

TM: No (laughs). No, I don’t want that. I want to be a writer who invites conversation about some things. But I don’t want to be anyone’s guru or therapist.

AE: Do you feel people hang that on you?

TM: Yes, they do.
AE: How do you feel about that?

TM: I ignore it.

AE: Going back to an earlier question about why you began writing these books, was it in reaction against the self-help books?

TM: No. Not at all. I have no interest whatsoever in being critical. It’s more positive than that.

AE: Was it at all in response to this urge that people have to tie everything up? You write in the prologue, page six, of *A Blue Fire*: “Soul-making is not interpretation, it is not change, and it is not self-improvement—all modern attempts to get the upper hand on fate and therefore to constrain the soul.”

TM: I do try to move against the idea of interpreting things, explaining things, having them all tied up. Yes, I am speaking against that but that isn’t really the motive of the writing.

AE: So the motivation—

TM: It’s multilevel, that’s the trouble. Part of it is a response to having been a therapist for a long time, sitting one-on-one with people, finding some very interesting things happening over and over again. I thought it would be interesting to write up my approach to that work.

AE: Interesting things—not just the symptoms being presented but the way of working through them?

TM: Yes. The way of working through them.

AE: Presenting a therapeutic model?

TM: Yes. But the trouble with this model is that it’s a nonmodel. Therapy has almost to be turned inside out. I speak once in a while to groups of only therapists. This week in Indianapolis I spoke to a group of mostly Gestalt therapists. Two to three weeks ago I spoke in Newport, Rhode Island, to holistic counselors. I admire the work they are doing. I feel very close to it, having done it myself for a long time. I do not write that we should stop doing therapy,
but I do suggest that care of the soul is bigger and broader than therapy and that it is something we can do constructively every day.

A lot of times we think of therapy as solving problems. But care of the soul is not a problem-solving method at all. The tradition is that soul does fine as long as it is fed and nourished regularly. I’m trying to say there are things that will feed the soul. A lot of things we do won’t. We live in a society that starves our soul, so we have to resist the culture somewhat to care for the soul. And if we choose our professions and the ways we spend our time and our homes in which we live, if we take care of our families and not see them as problems and nurture our relationships and friendships and marriages, then, if I promise any reward, it is that, if the soul is fed, it probably will not show its complaints so badly.

But I can’t even promise that, because from another point of view soul is also a reservoir. It’s always presenting new material. Either from within us, intuitions, or from the world outside, we are given new life, new relationships, new work to do. So I can’t promise that if we nurture our souls life will have fewer problems. And yet caring for the soul has its own reward: living from a deeper place. If we did this we would then aim for more wisdom instead of understanding, more character as individuals, rather than some kind of improved product of the self. Then our work, our care of the soul, would be communal; we would be more connected to the world and people by the nature of the thing.

These are rewards, but they are not solutions to problems. They are another context of living. If that context were set up, therapy would look different, I think. Now we bring everything to therapy because we think we have a problem to be solved. But if we were all caring for the soul, therapy could focus more specifically on those moments of craziness or extreme pain or extreme difficulty in a relationship.

AE: Are you saying also that for many people therapy is the only time they try to care for the soul?

TM: Exactly. I think if you were caring for the soul you’d have millions of people leaving therapy. You wouldn’t do it so much. It
would be like you don't go to the hospital all the time. You take care of your health (laughs).

AE: In your beautiful introduction to The Planets Within, you talk of astrology as a mirror of soul.

TM: Today people constantly make fun of astrology. But for centuries the astrological awareness allowed people to recognize that we are so profound in ourselves that we mirror that great universe; we are that deep and that big. We are not clocks, we’re not biology, we are not chemistry and not even genes. Astrology maintains a certain sacredness in the world we live in. We secularize the world when we get rid of it. So I feel like a total anachronism talking about it. I lectured to the Connecticut Astrological Association about two months ago. They want to know how to solve a person’s personality problems with astrology. They’re in the same place that the therapists are, I think. Even the astrologers today don’t have it.

AE: And your vision is that these connections, the Marsian, and the Venusian pulls, are too enormous. They can’t be shrunk down—

TM: Personalized.

AE: They can be identified as being in the person—

TM: But they’re bigger than the person. Today I look out the windows. I see all the green of the trees and plants. An astrologer of the past, 500 years ago, would have said Venus is making herself known. Green is her color. So we can talk of our feelings of sexuality and sensuality, and if we knew, or reflected upon, the beauty of nature, we might have a better sense of our own Venusian fantasies, our sexual fantasies. Because they’re related to each other. Now I can’t make that a simple explanation. But take a few weeks to talk about it and you probably could get deeper and deeper into your own personal beliefs.

AE: So if I have that recognition, I might be able to relax a little more?

TM: Absolutely. With that broader perspective you get less anxious and personalize it less; you don’t ask, “What’s wrong with
me?” When I was doing therapy I was interested in writing up what was happening. I was not personalizing those things, I was not trying to solve problems. I was trying to offer an inviting place for all of these feelings and thoughts to be present, to offer a deeper imagination for them all.
Dr. Freud and Dr. Spock

BY JAMES SULLIVAN

On the afternoon of 11 July 1971, Dr. Benjamin Spock braced himself for his address to the National Women’s Political Caucus in Washington, D.C. The audience was hostile; Spock meant to speak on behalf of a coalition of progressive political parties, but the women seated before him had not forgiven Spock for the sexism that slanted his famous child-rearing advice. Some women walked out as he began speaking. When he concluded, Spock gripped the podium as Gloria Steinem, founder of Ms. magazine, rose from the middle of the audience and thundered, “Dr. Spock, I hope you realize you have been a major oppressor of women in the same category as Sigmund Freud!” Spock hung his head in shame, or so some believed. Actually he was looking down at the lectern, trying to compose some response, and feeling a little proud to be placed in the same category as Dr. Freud.1

Steinem’s denunciation hit the mark; the theories of Freud, known broadly as psychoanalysis, formed the foundation of Spock’s pediatric advice and political philosophy. In the 1930s Spock had studied psychoanalysis at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute while practicing pediatrics. In 1946 Spock published The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care, which translated psychoanalytic theories about adult neuroses into practical advice for parents.

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Note: The author thanks Kimberly Brodkin for her helpful suggestions and claims persistent weaknesses as his own.

raising children. A milestone in pediatrics, *Baby and Child Care* reflected the broader impact on professional medicine of Freud’s work, which marked the transition from a strictly biological understanding of mental phenomena to a more psychological approach. Psychoanalysis informed Spock’s politics as well, shaping his critique of the United States war in Vietnam and of the emerging feminist movement.²

Psychoanalysis arrived on American shores in 1909. In the autumn of that year Freud made his first and only visit to the United States where he delivered five lectures on psychoanalysis as part of the twentieth anniversary celebration of the founding of Clark University. Dr. Granville Stanley Hall, the president of Clark and a key figure in the founding of experimental psychology in the United States, had invited Freud to present his then-new theories to an audience of prominent American academics and medical practitioners. Carl Jung and Sandor Ferenczi accompanied Freud, and, along with the eminent American academic William James, all were house guests of Hall in the small Massachusetts city of Worcester, forty miles outside of Boston. Each morning, while walking through the surrounding woodlands, Freud composed his thoughts for the day’s lecture, which he delivered extempore in German. Gratified by the respect accorded him at Clark, Freud approached each day eager to persuade his audience, and the introductory lectures he delivered there remain perhaps the clearest exposition of early psychoanalytic theory on record.³


Before the Clark Conference in 1909, only a handful of American doctors had heard anything of Freud’s work, and even in Europe Freud’s ideas had gained little acceptance. Before the advent of dynamic psychology, medical professionals understood mental disorders almost exclusively in terms of biological mechanics. That is, doctors assumed that all mental phenomena were the result of the physical operation of the nervous system, and they strove to manipulate the tangible world of the body to achieve cures in the more elusive realm of the mind. This strictly biological approach facilitated experimentation and observation, distinguishing neurology, psychiatry, and psychology as “scientific” pursuits and separating medical professionals from spiritual healers, exorcists, and various other lay enthusiasts. Unfortunately, medicine’s commitment to a physiological etiology of mental disorders led to discouragingly few effective treatments; prescriptions of diet, massage, exercise, or bed rest did little for those suffering from emotional or neurological disturbances. In the first decades of the twentieth century, physicians in the field of mental health were searching for new ways of thinking that promised results, and a small number of doctors on both sides of the Atlantic were moving beyond the mechanistic, biological approach to consider the dynamic, psychological explanations offered by Freud and his pupils.4

Three of the most important figures in the growth of psychoanalysis in the United States heard Freud speak at Clark. James Jackson Putnam, a prominent Boston physician and professor of neurology at Harvard, capped a long and distinguished career by rejecting much of his own teaching to become the first president of the American Psychoanalytic Association. His unimpeachable reputation helped avert Victorian objections to the sexual content of Freudian psychology and assured that psychoanalysis would receive serious consideration. Adolf Meyer, the administrator of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and later the chairman of the Psychiatry Department at Johns Hopkins, also lent his considerable reputation to psychoanalysis. Meyer required that a generation of medical students familiarize themselves with Freud’s work, and several of Meyer’s students went on to become important figures in the American psychoanalytic movement. Abraham Arden Brill had already studied with Jung at Burghölzi, Switzerland, and had taken the lead in translating Freud’s work into English. In 1911 Brill founded the New York Psychoanalytic Society, and in 1931 the Society opened the New York Psychoanalytic Institute. Dedicated to training psychoanalysts, the Institute amassed perhaps the largest library of psychoanalytic material in the world and attracted many of the best medical students in the area to its seminars at 247 East 82nd Street.5

It was here that Spock gained his formal education in psychoanalytic theory and practice. In 1932, after completing his training at Yale Medical School and Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons and finishing a residency in pediatrics, Spock took another residency in psychiatry at the Payne Whitney Clinic in New York


City. At the clinic, colleagues trained in psychoanalysis impressed Spock with the sense they made of their patients' problems. In 1933 Spock opened his own pediatric practice and pursued his interest in Freud's ideas by enrolling in the Psychoanalytic Institute. Spock attended two seminars each week, and, as was expected of everyone at the Institute, Spock underwent analysis himself, with Bertram Lewin and Sandor Rado, two well known figures in the psychoanalytic movement. In the five years that Spock spent there, the Institute became a world-class center of psychoanalysis as the New York Psychoanalytic Society incorporated colleagues fleeing Hitler's Germany. The New York Institute also became famous for its loyalty to Freudian orthodoxy, even as the psychoanalytic movement splintered in Europe. Through his affiliation at the Institute, Spock met people on the leading edge of psychology and progressive education, he began lifelong friendships with Margaret Mead and Erik Erikson, and he received the best training available in the United States in psychoanalysis.  

But nobody at the Psychoanalytic Institute could tell Spock what he really wanted to know; no one could translate psychoanalytic ideas about adults into practical advice for raising psychologically healthy children. Freudian theory held that a patient's psychological disturbance originated in some earlier traumatic episode, and frequently this trauma was thought to have occurred as early as childhood or even infancy. Psychoanalysts, however, had focused on diagnosis and treatment, not prevention. They agreed, for example, that some adult psychological problems derived from a too forceful or too early weaning from a mother's breast, but no psychoanalyst could say when the right time was for weaning. Toilet training could lead to problems as well, but again, psychoanalysts had no advice for parents.

Spock was one of the first people to stand at the crossroads of pediatrics and psychoanalysis. As a practicing pediatrician, Spock

dealt with babies, children, and their parents every day, and as a convinced Freudian, Spock struggled to turn psychoanalytic theory into sound pediatric advice. Through eleven years of professional practice he had developed his ideas as well as a knack for explaining them in a simple and reassuring manner. He had published a handful of articles on various aspects of “preventative psychiatry,” and finally, in 1946 he brought his ideas together in *Baby and Child Care.*

The psychoanalytic foundation of Spock’s famous child-rearing manual remains visible in his treatment of a number of topics: childish interest in genitalia (it’s natural), a father’s role (it’s vital), sharing the parents’ bed (don’t do it). But Spock’s advice on infant feeding and toilet training are particularly revealing. Both of these timeless topics also illustrate the larger impact of Freud’s ideas on child-rearing advice in the United States.

In the fifty years before the publication of *Baby and Child Care,* the most popular child-rearing manuals demanded that mothers feed their infants according to a rigid schedule. Spock’s own mother, for example, raised Spock according to Dr. Luther Emmet Holt’s *The Care and Feeding of Children,* perhaps the best known child-rearing manual in the first years of the twentieth century. Holt urged mothers to begin a regular feeding schedule “during the first week of life,” feeding infants “every two hours during the day, twice during the night, or ten feedings during the twenty-four hours.” Holt provided an elaborate chart that allowed mothers to


calculate the amount of food and the correct interval between feedings based on an infant’s age.\textsuperscript{10}

In 1928 Dr. John B. Watson, a behavioral psychologist at Johns Hopkins University, superseded Holt’s work with his manual \textit{Psychological Care of the Infant and Child}, but Watson too urged a regular regime of feeding. “Modern training calls always for an orderly life,” Watson averred, and like Holt before him, Watson implied that deviating from an infant’s regular feeding schedule could lead to a lifetime of bad habits and weak character.\textsuperscript{11} Strict regularity in infant feeding seemed a sensible practice in an age when babies frequently died of diarrhea. In the first decades of the twentieth century, after pasteurized milk became the standard, the incidence of infant diarrhea declined, but strict regularity in feeding had become traditional wisdom. Likewise, the belief that regularity in feeding led to strength of character reflected the mechanistic, biological axioms of an earlier era of psychology.\textsuperscript{12}

In \textit{Baby and Child Care} Spock repudiated strict feeding schedules in favor of a more flexible approach, which reflected psychoanalytic ideas about infant psychological development. Freud had proposed that in the first year of life an infant experiences the world primarily through its mouth, and through experiencing some mixture of pleasure and pain in this “oral stage” a person forms fundamental assumptions about the nature of the world and its likelihood to satisfy or frustrate.\textsuperscript{13} On this basis, Spock advised that lockstep regularity in feeding was much less important than a positive expe-
rience during feeding. Spock explained that, for the infant, “feed­ing is his great joy.” A baby nurses not only “because he is hungry,” but also “because he loves to suck,” and “he gets his early ideas about life from the way feeding goes.” Without mentioning Freud or resorting to jargon, Spock brought a psychoanalytic un­derstanding of infant psychology to his readers.

A baby is meant to spend his first year getting hungry, de­manding food, enjoying it, reaching satisfaction—a lusty success story, repeated at least three times a day, week after week. It builds into him self-confidence, outgoingness, trust in his mother. But if mealtime becomes a struggle, if feeding becomes something that is done to him, he goes on the defensive and builds up a balky, suspicious attitude to­ward life and toward people.

With this perspective, Spock simply advised parents to feed an in­fant when the infant seemed hungry. While he cautioned against grossly over or under feeding, he emphasized satisfaction for hun­gry babies in order to inculcate in them a “positive feeling for life.” Spock thereby ushered in the now common practice of “demand feeding,” but the logic behind this practice remains es­sentially Freudian.

The influence of psychoanalytic ideas upon toilet-training ad­vice provides a parallel example. At the turn of the century, Holt declared that an infant should be using a toilet “easily by the third month if training is begun early” and urged that baby bowels should “move at exactly the same time every day.” Watson’s ad­vice specified that baby bladders “only” should be relieved at 6:30 a.m. and bowels at 8:00 a.m. Watson suggested that the baby be strapped into a special toilet seat and then “left in the bathroom without toys and with the door closed” until the deed was done. “Under no circumstances,” Watson proclaimed, “should the door be left open or the mother or nurse stay with the child,” warning

15. Ibid., 81.
16. Ibid.
17. Holt, 50.
Dr. Benjamin Spock with a young patient and her mother (undated photo by Harold Corsini; courtesy of Syracuse University Library).
that such practices lead “to dawdling, loud conversation,” and “in general to unsocial and dependent behavior.”18 Neither Watson nor Holt distinguished between children of different ages; they each prescribed a single routine to be learned early and maintained strictly. And neither Watson nor Holt explained their emphases on bowel regularity or its links to a disciplined character, perhaps because, after a century of American fascination with matters digestive, such opinions seemed self-evidently sensible.

Informed by psychoanalytic theory, Spock broke from the tradition of strict toilet discipline and advised parents “to leave bowel training almost entirely up to your baby.”19 Freud had theorized that in the second year of life a baby outgrows oral fascinations and focuses upon consciously controlling the rest of the body. Freud called this the “anal stage” in reference to the child’s new-found control over bowel movements, and Freud held that the balance of frustration and satisfaction experienced in this stage shaped a person’s basic ability to cooperate with others, negotiate new situations, and cope with life’s imperfections.20 Spock, therefore, assured parents that the timing or strictness of toilet training was less important than “how you go about it.” Harsh training, Spock wrote, “goes right against [a] baby’s grain at this age,” because “in the second year” a baby begins “to gain more control” and be “more independent.” A baby “can hold back on the movement at one time and push with a will at another.” So, Spock urged, parents should maintain a “casual” approach and “never make an issue of the toilet or shame the baby when he fails or has an accident.”21 Spock also included a warning which spelled out the psychoanalytic position.

When a baby gets into a real battle with his mother, it is not just the training which suffers, but also his personality. First of all, he becomes too obstinate, gets in a mood to say “no”

19. Spock, Baby and Child Care, 196.
to everything, whether he means it or not. (We all know grownups who are still automatically saying “no” to every request.) He becomes too hostile and “fighty.”

Spock cautioned further that shaming a child about soiling may lead the child “to dread all kinds of dirtiness,” and “if this worrisomeness is deeply implanted at an early age, it’s apt to turn him into a fussy, finicky person—the kind who’s afraid to enjoy himself or try anything new, the kind who is unhappy unless everything is ‘just so.’” To avoid these pitfalls, Spock advised a relaxed approach to toilet training designed to encourage a child to feel capable and in control, an approach derived from psychoanalytic theory.

Baby and Child Care became the best-selling book in United States history, making Spock a household name, and Spock traded on this celebrity status to support his political convictions. A Democrat since 1928, Spock was famous enough by the 1950s to make public appearances in support of Adlai Stevenson. In 1960 Spock and Jacqueline Kennedy arranged a televised meeting to support her husband’s candidacy; and in 1962, in response to President Kennedy’s announcement that the United States would resume atmospheric testing of atomic weapons, Spock joined the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE) and became a prominent figure in the peace movement. In 1964, after receiving a personal presidential promise to end United States involvement in Vietnam, Spock supported Lyndon Johnson. The following year, when Johnson vastly expanded the war effort, Spock redoubled his own efforts to arouse public opinion against the war. In January 1968 the federal government indicted Spock and four others for conspiring to counsel, aid, and abet resistance to the draft. A Boston jury convicted the five men, but in 1969 an appellate judge overturned the decision. In 1972 Spock ran for the United States presidency as a candidate for the People’s Party, a coalition of small, left-leaning political organizations; and throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s Spock has remained active in various progressive political causes.

22. Ibid., 195.
24. Adelaide K. Eisenmann to Spock, 17 October 1960, Correspondence, 1–18
Spock's ideas evolved throughout this odyssey, but psychoanalytic theory provided the touchstone of his political philosophy as well as the foundation of his child-rearing advice. During Spock's training at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, doctrinaire Freudsians presented psychoanalysis not simply as one perspective on personality development, but rather as the discovery of the true essence and operation of human nature, as a science proven by clinical evidence. Spock assimilated this position, and over the course of his professional career he found little reason to change his mind. In 1969 Spock based the most complete statement of his political philosophy, *Decent and Indecent: Our Personal and Political Behavior*, on psychoanalytic theory. In particular, Spock invoked Freud's theory of the "Oedipus complex" to condemn both the war in Vietnam and the war between the sexes.25

The Oedipus complex refers to parental relationships within the nuclear family as experienced by children between the ages of about three and six years. Freud argued that around this age children develop a strong, possessive, sexual attraction to the parent of the opposite sex and that this attraction generates feelings of rivalry and hostility toward the parent of the same sex. At the same time, however, children love, idealize, and strive to emulate the parent

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of the same sex. This contradiction leads children to feel guilt about their hostility, to recognize their complete dependence, and to abandon their hopeless rivalry. In what Freud held to be the “normal” course of development, children repress their feelings of sexual attraction and hostility into their unconscious minds and sublimate (unconsciously redirect) the energy of those feelings into constructive pursuits that transcend the family.26

According to Freud, however, childish notions about the difference between male and female genitalia lead little boys to develop differently from little girls. During the Oedipal stage, Freud asserted, a boy discovers that a girl lacks a penis, and because sexual difference and function remain a mystery to him, he imagines that she must have lost her penis through some injury. He proceeds to worry that he may lose his penis as well and so suffers from what Freud described as “castration anxiety.” This anxiety intensifies the Oedipal rivalry boys feel with their fathers; the stakes are higher in a boy’s imagined contest with his father because boys have something to lose. This leads boys to repress their feelings and sublimate their energies more vigorously than girls, which, Freud argued, helps explain why men devote their lives to more abstract concerns and to careers outside the home.27 When a little girl discovers that some people have penises, Freud averred, she feels inferior, resentful, and envious, and she will remain psychologically crippled until she transforms her desire to have a penis into a desire to have a child.28

In Decent and Indecent, Spock psychoanalyzed President Johnson


and the American body politic to uncover the psychological ori­
gins of the United States war in Vietnam. Spock followed Freud in
arguing that the Oedipal rivalry coupled with castration anxiety re­
sulted in a recurring need among men to prove their virility. In
fact, “the adequacy of their virility” is “a core problem for men”
persisting “throughout boyhood and manhood” and intensifying
the impulse “to dominate,” which Spock called “the power drive.”
Briefly reviewing the history of the Vietnam War, Spock argued
further that Americans ascribed their “own hostility” to the Viet­
namese communists, relieving their uncertainties and guilt by
effectively blaming the victim in a “mental maneuver” called “pro­
jection.” Spock wondered whether “there will ever be a clearer
example of how a nation lets itself in for war—through power striv­
ing and the paranoid projection of its own aggressiveness—than in
America’s involvement in Vietnam.” Spock argued that “the most
significant reason” for Johnson’s escalation of the war “was his ex­
cessive need to prove virility and to save face.” Spock believed that
“capitalist imperialism has been immediately responsible” for
United States aggression in Southeast Asia, but he concluded that
“we have to admit that it is ultimately an aspect of the power drive
latent in every individual and in every group of men.” In short, “it
is criminal egotism on a monstrous scale.” 29

Spock’s Freudian perspective led to a more conservative argu­
ment concerning the growing feminist movement. Retelling the
Oedipal drama, Spock noted that “in the rivalry with her mother”
a little girl “does not feel nearly the degree of awe that the boy does
for his father” because “she is not as subjected to the fear of future
injury as he.” Because her sublimation is correspondingly less in­
tense, “she is not as apt . . . to become fascinated with such particu­
larly abstract subjects as mathematics and, later, physics and law,”
and she is “less preoccupied . . . with trying to become a great artist,
inventor, discoverer.” Spock surmised that women “have more
passivity in the inborn core of their personality” and are “more
compliant” and less “striving,” which meant that “women are usu­
ally more patient in working at unexciting, repetitive tasks.”
Added to their “realism, sensibleness,” and “personalness,” such

29. Spock, Decent and Indecent, 52, 54, 110–1, 106, 108–9, 121, 125, 126, 159.
qualities made women "indispensable as wives, mothers, nurses, secretaries." Spock deplored "the competitive type of feminism" which exaggerated "the rivalry between sexes" and he claimed "that psychologically the most vehement feminists were motivated not so much by altruism toward their own sex as by an unusually fierce envy of men." Spock believed in equal pay for equal work, but he felt "it would be fairer" if society would place equal value on women's traditional roles.\(^{30}\)

As a result of his encounter with Steinem and other feminists, Spock reexamined his beliefs as well as his role in perpetuating oppressive gender stereotypes, and in the early 1970s he changed his mind. He rewrote much of *Decent and Indecent* and became more thoughtful and vigorous in his political support of women's rights. In 1976 Spock completed the fourth edition of *Baby and Child Care*. In this revision he dropped his assumption that mothers were primarily responsible for children, he reversed his suggestion that parents consciously reinforce gender identification, and he struggled to balance his use of gendered pronouns. In July 1982, the tenth anniversary edition of Steinem's *Ms.* magazine listed Spock as one of their "male heroes" of feminism.\(^{31}\)

The first generation of children raised "according to Dr. Spock" are now, many of them, grandparents, and still mothers and fathers are reaching for *Baby and Child Care*. Along with practical information, they imbibe the principles of psychoanalysis inherent in Spock's advice. In the post-World War II era, references to psychoanalytic concepts have proliferated throughout United States culture; psychoanalysis has grown from an academic and clinical discourse into a broadly shared set of values, metaphors, and narratives through which Americans conceptualize personal and national development. In Spock's work, we can begin to discern what this new way of thinking has clarified for us and what it has obscured.

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30. Ibid., 25-6, 45-6, 48, 58, 71, 61, 34.
Arna Bontemps’s Creole Heritage

BY CHARLES L. JAMES

Young Arna Bontemps arrived in New York City during the summer of 1924 when the Harlem Renaissance was beginning to peak and the jazz age was hitting its stride. A year out of college, he had journeyed by train from Los Angeles, determined to find a place for himself as a writer.

Arna Wendell Bontemps was born in Louisiana in 1902, but when he was three, his father, a bricklayer and itinerant musician, and his mother, a school teacher, took him and his sister to California, the racial climate in the South having become intolerable. Bontemps grew up in California and, while attending Pacific Union College, began to write poetry. After college he accepted a teaching position in Harlem, where his writing talent blossomed.

In that colorful upper Manhattan community he met Langston Hughes, who became a lifelong friend and collaborator, and other important figures of the Harlem Renaissance, including writers James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, and the painter Aaron Douglas. By 1927 Bontemps had won several awards for his poetry.¹

During the next half-century, he would write many books of poetry and fiction, most notably the novel Black Thunder, about a failed slave insurrection.² Through juvenile stories, histories, and


1. Twice he won the Alexander Pushkin prize offered by Opportunity (the journal of the Urban League edited by Charles S. Johnson): in 1926 for “Golgotha Is a Mountain” and in 1927 for “The Return.” In 1927 he also won first prize for “Nocturne at Bethesda” awarded by The Crisis (the NAACP magazine edited by W. E. B. DuBois).

². Black Thunder, Gabriel’s Revolt: Virginia, 1800 (Macmillan, 1936). A later edi-
Arna Wendell Bontemps, ca. 1929.

biographies, he made young blacks aware of their own rich her­
itage. As head librarian (1943–64) at Fisk University he developed a
significant collection of archives of black authors and statesmen.
He also edited compilations of poetry, fiction, folklore, essays, and
slave narratives. After his retirement from Fisk, he received two

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tion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992) includes a new introduction by Arnold Ram­
persad and Arna Bontemps's introduction to the 1968 edition. The first draft of
the novel and the initial reviews after publication are housed in Syracuse Univer­
sity Library as part of the Arna Bontemps Papers.
honorary degrees and distinguished professorial appointments at the University of Illinois, Yale University, and, again, Fisk, as writer-in-residence. He died in 1973.

Bontemps began to write fiction out of a need to order and comprehend the accumulated fragments of his Louisiana origins, passed to him from his relatives. First, he completed the autobiographical “Chariot in the Cloud” late in 1929, but the work never found a publisher. The second effort was published as God Sends Sunday (1931), written in celebration of his favorite uncle, Buddy.

He had become fascinated by his bloodline—a gumbo mix of French, African, Native American, and British—in part because of his appearance, about which total strangers would often query him. On the train journey east, for example, a white couple from Denver commented that he looked like something other than an American or African Negro. Bontemps knew that he could allay most curiosity about his dusky complexion, his severe Roman nose, and his dark curly hair by saying that he was born in Louisiana.

Arna Bontemps was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on 13 October 1902. The southern cottage in which his mother, Maria Caroline Pembroke Bontemps, gave birth first to Arna and then to his


4. Uncle Buddy—Joseph P. Ward Jr.—was the youngest brother of Arna’s maternal grandmother, Sarah Ward Pembroke. Both figures were influential in Arna’s life. Uncle Buddy’s death occurred around the time the novel was published, and Arna deeply regretted that Uncle Buddy never read the book. The title God Sends Sunday (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931) provoked stormy criticism against Bontemps by his church and his employer, both Seventh-Day Adventist institutions, and strained relations with his father, then an Adventist elder. Adaptation of the novel in collaboration with Countee Cullen subsequently led to the 1945 Broadway musical Saint Louis Woman, the script for which (in its several variations) is in the Syracuse University Library.

5. In June 1971 tape-recorded interviews by the author at the Bontemps home in Nashville, Arna Bontemps related several instances when questions of his identity were advanced by total strangers.

6. This article is based on excerpts from the first chapter of my work in progress about the life of Arna Bontemps.
sister Ruby two years later, sat at the upper end of Alexandria’s extensive black community. The cottage was spacious enough to shelter an extended family: Arna’s grandparents, Sarah and her husband Joseph, their two sons and five daughters, and their children.

Her home suited the disposition of Sarah Ward Pembroke, for instead of conforming to the common style of the black community, it gave the appearance of irregularity in construction and eclecticism in taste. In fact the style of this Queen Anne cottage was an aesthetic and economic step above the standard shotgun cottages that were constructed in large numbers during the 1880s when the regional railroad network was evolving in the South and throughout the Red River waterways. Unlike many other houses of black people in the area, the cottage boasted two brick chimneys serving four fireplaces and a kitchen.

Arna would someday think of the Louisiana of his childhood as a lost Eden and write about his memories—for instance, the afternoon when his several handsome aunts emerged from the cottage where they were working as seamstresses, extending their aprons to collect falling pecans being shaken from a front-yard tree by a genie of an uncle. There was a large stone that doubled as a bench for him and his grandmother on sultry evenings after the sun had gone down, or as a waiting post when his young uncles were due to return from school. He would recall the times when they hitched up

7. Lloyd Vogt, New Orleans Houses (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1985), 22–3; Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York: Knopf, 1986), 163–4; and John A. Jakle et al., 212b, c. According to Jakle et al. (145) and Vogt (23), the shotgun house with its rooms arranged directly behind one another, front to back, was associated with blacks and poor whites in and around Alexandria. Its name probably derived from the notion that if a shotgun were fired through the front door all the pellets would leave through the rear door without hitting anything. These slender constructions, which may be Haitian or West African in origin, began to appear in New Orleans during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and became popular in the rural communities north and west of New Orleans after the Civil War.

8. In 1992, under the auspices of the Arna Bontemps Foundation, the house was moved from its original site out of the path of an interstate highway, refurbished, and converted into the Arna Bontemps African-American Museum and Cultural Arts Center, the only one of its kind in the State of Louisiana.
the rig to Daisy the mare and crossed the Red River on the new wooden bridge to visit Grandmother Pembroke’s friends in the woods beyond Pineville.⁹

From Texas the Red River cuts southeasterly across Louisiana and meets with the Old and the Atchafalaya rivers east of Alexan-

dria, which together seek the Mississippi before that great river falls past New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico. For many years the Red River was the principal link of commerce between the ports that sprang up along its shorelines. Alexandria was the last sizable community on the river before it joined the Mississippi, and its location allowed it to serve the surrounding agricultural communities. The city sits just below the rapids for which Rapides Parish—the municipality in which Alexandria is situated—earned its name, and its site on the south bank of the river made it at once susceptible to the annual floods and indispensable as a port of commerce. During the early nineteenth century, sprawling plantations to the north, south, and west, with their black slave labor, produced rich crops of cotton and sugarcane that were shipped through the port of Alexandria to the New Orleans markets. Alexandria was for many years prior to Arna Bontemps’s birth a place of ethnic and cultural confluence.

The city is an oval island formed at a point where the Bayou Rapides breaks away south from the Red River for some fifteen miles before rejoining it once again. Pineville sits on the opposing bank, a sloping highland bereft of the alluvial soil that enriches Alexandria, but spared the annual threat of rising flood waters that led some years later to the erection of a levee along the south bank. The two communities coexisted in a state of congenial reciprocity that continues to this day. Arna’s buggy journeys across the bridge with Grandma Pembroke to visit friends and kin carried him over the rising bluffs, past Pineville’s cemeteries and into the picturesque pine hills.

For Sarah Ward Pembroke, journeys into the piney woods with Arna in tow recalled the days of her own childhood and adolescence when she was a privileged offspring of a well-to-do white entrepreneur. Like her own grandchild, she once had little knowledge of her special status or of how precarious, after all, it would prove to be. She was born on 4 July 1854, less than thirty miles north of Pineville in what was then Catahoula Parish at the White Sulphur Springs resort and health spa. While it is true that her mother was a slave there,¹⁰ a fact that officially made Sarah and her

¹⁰. I have drawn this conclusion based upon the 1850 Louisiana census and in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. Arna Bontemps noted on 8 November 1970, “I did not have a white father. I did not have a white grandfather.
Louisiana (Map by D. Michael Kirchoff, Syracuse University Cartographic Lab.)
siblings slaves as well, Sarah, as the child of the proprietor, Joseph P. Ward, was never treated as such and she never saw her mother or her siblings treated as slaves at the time. She met other slaves daily at White Sulphur Springs, and they were of many complexions and temperaments, but it appeared that none was held in the same estimate as members of her family.

Many slaves lived in the immediate vicinity. Some arrived at the springs with their masters and slept in the outlying quarters provided for that purpose. But for Sarah, most slaves seemed too crude to warrant the privilege of her association. After all, her mother was well regarded as much for her ability as the resort cook as for her relationship to the proprietor. Sarah did not become self-conscious about her own status until the Civil War was nearly over. It was not until after the mysterious disappearance and death of Joseph Ward just ahead of the federal troops’ entry into Catahoula Parish that her family felt the sting of her mother’s status.

Joseph P. Ward, an adventurer from the state of Georgia, had managed to parlay a mineral spring in the remote region of Catahoula Parish into a lucrative retreat. In 1830, while making his way by wagon train from Warm Springs, Georgia, to the sparsely

I had two white great-grandfathers, and neither raped my black great-grandmothers. I can prove that these couples lived together as families and bore lovely children. The white men emancipated their black helpmates and their offspring were born free in Louisiana in 1835” (Bontemps Family Papers, Fisk University). Evidence does exist for the Bontemps of Avoyelles Parish through records of the Catholic church, but local court records at Catahoula Parish (then the jurisdiction for White Sulphur Springs) shed no light on this matter with regard to the Wards.

11. There is controversy about Ward’s origins. The Ward-Pembroke clan contended that he was of British descent, if not, indeed, titled; at times they referred to him as Lord. According to the 1860 Louisiana census, Ward’s place of birth was South Carolina. The otherwise useful histories shed little light on the proprietor; they include Ann McClendon-Lukens and Christy Lukens, The History of Lasalle Parish (privately published, March, 1985), 9–10; and Ruth Irene Jones, “Antebellum Watering Places of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas” (master’s thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 1954), 47. As Jones’s study reveals, there were many popular mineral spring retreats throughout the urban and rural regions of Louisiana prior to the Civil War, 1–5 passim.
settled Texas territory, Ward happened upon a bubbling sulphur spring that seemed unclaimed and unappreciated, except by some Indians native to the region. He knew that such springs back East attracted the wealthiest and most influential citizens, and Ward's own former community of Warm Springs, Georgia, thrived nobly. In the South the most highly regarded health resort was White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, and Ward aimed to replicate its success. He declared the spot the White Sulphur Springs of the Southwest.

In time he erected a two-story hotel and a tavern replete with a bar for dispensing glasses of spring water along with more potent concoctions. A gambling house, a dance hall, a general merchandise store, and extensive quarters for slaves soon followed. By 1850 White Sulphur Springs boasted two large hotels facing each other on opposite hillsides, a livery stable, a cotton gin, a grist mill, a school, and even its own United States post office.\(^{12}\)

Sarah was the second of five children born to Charlotte Chlotilde La Crenton. Family history asserts that Charlotte was an adult when she was purchased by Ward at the New Orleans port of entry sometime late in the 1840s when the importation of slaves was illegal and risky. The derivation of her French name is unknown, but her descendants maintain that her own mother came from Madagascar.\(^{13}\) Arna alluded to her as “a crude half-Indian, half-African woman.” Charlotte Chlotilde herself is believed to have been born in Martinique, Haiti, or Guadeloupe. She was conversant in French and she spoke a broken English, probably a patois. Statuesque and very dark of complexion, she cut a striking and handsome figure. So long as Joseph Ward controlled the resort, Charlotte Chlotilde was mistress of the estate.

Charlotte had five children, not all of them Ward’s. First she mothered a son named Philo by a father who remains unnamed. Sarah Ward, Joseph Ward’s first child by Charlotte Chlotilde, was born in 1854. Some two years later, Charlotte had a third child,

\(^{12}\) McClendon-Lukens, 9–10; and Jones, 47. Also see Joseph Wechsberg, The Lost World of the Great Spas (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 179–205 passim.

\(^{13}\) Anna J. Stokes (Aunt Anna of the Pembrokes, then living at 1955 18th Street in Santa Monica, California) to Arna Bontemps, [September 1953?], Bontemps Family Papers, Fisk University.
who was named Jane Brown. The father of this child, for reasons not clear, currently remains unnamed as well. There was no mystery about Charlotte’s fourth child, however. Joseph P. Ward Jr. was born in 1862. Nearly nine years passed before Charlotte Chlotilde gave birth to her fifth and final child, Charles Green, born in 1871, long after Ward’s death, when Charlotte Chlotilde LaCrenton had become Charlotte Green. The fifth child was the offspring of an unhappy marriage to one Stephen Green, a black resident of Catahoula Parish. Apparently feeling resentment towards Charlotte Green’s other children, especially the mulattos, Stephen Green refused to provide for them. 14

The year before Joseph Ward Jr. was born, the 9 June 1861 Picayune of New Orleans reported,

There is more than the usual stir and animation in our streets, considering the time of year, and we are not without out-of-town visitors. We have, and are likely to have, more stay-at-homes and can’t-get-aways with us, this summer, than has been usual heretofore, the minds of our citizens being preoccupied with something more serious and real than pleasure seeking at distant watering places. 15

By 1 May of the following year the city of New Orleans surrendered to the Union forces, and federal occupation and control of this thriving port set the entire state on edge. Most of all, the prospect of military forays into the interior was the cause of deep concern among the citizenry up and down the Red River as far north as Shreveport, the site of confederate headquarters in Louisiana. The first invasion into central Louisiana happened in the spring of 1863. Federal troops seized cotton and livestock and slaves from local people and sent wealthy planter families fleeing into Texas with any valuables they could salvage, including costly

14. Ruby Bontemps Troy to Arna Bontemps, October 1941, Bontemps Family Papers. The letter is in response to Arna’s request that she elicit details of family history from their grandmother, Sarah Ward Pembroke, for a projected biography. Arna was then living in Chicago; his sister Ruby was living in Los Angeles close to the eighty-seven-year-old matriarch.
15. Quoted in Jones, 4.
slaves. Contraband slaves, meanwhile, joined with federal troops and were removed to New Orleans, some to labor for the occupying forces, some to be conscripted into military service. This treatment of slaves as *contraband of war*—in the same category as captured guns and ammunition—had become Union policy beginning in May 1861, when a Union Army general refused to give up three slaves who had fled to his side after they had been forced to build confederate defenses.

The first incursion, intended to affirm the vulnerability of the region, merely set the stage for the next more devastating episode. It came in March 1864 and led to the burning of Alexandria. It was called “the most impressive display of military might in the Southwest,” with troops, cavalry, and artillery on land, and naval troop transports, including ironclad and tinclad vessels, commanding the Red River. Both the army and the navy foraged for supplies along the way, robbing and burning dwelling places as they went and meeting only scattered resistance from depleted confederate troops.

The federal fleet and the mass of troops eventually wended their way upriver, despite the fact that for the first time since 1855 the river’s level failed to rise. This invasion above the shallows and rapids was the most threatening incident since the start of the conflict for the inhabitants north of the rapids, including White Sulphur Springs. As the federals approached, family descendants report that Joseph Ward frantically sought to secure his valuables by burying them in the surrounding woods. Many years later, in an unpublished novella, Arna Bontemps brought his imagination to play on this episode and portrayed his ancestor frenetically burying and exhuming his cache.

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18. Bontemps Family Papers. Also find references to the hidden treasure incident in Anna J. Stokes’s unpublished autobiography (1953?) in the Arna Bontemps Papers, Syracuse University Library; and in Kirkland C. Jones, *Renaissance*
The further north the federals moved the stronger the resistance they met from the confederates. They also encountered frightened and hostile inhabitants, especially women and children. Most slaves, on the other hand, were delighted to see the blue uniforms, and crowds of contraband flocked after them. Union troops ranged into White Sulphur Springs and, after foraging for food and valuables, left the resort intact. By the third week of April, however, the exhausted federal forces began a retreat to the relative security of Alexandria, leaving the plantation country, from the Cane River south to Alexandria, in smoke and ruins. It was during this frenzied episode that Joseph Ward disappeared from Catahoula Parish.

As the federal troops retreated down the Red River, scattered confederate troops peppered the retreat and kept the staggered Union forces in a constant state of unbalance all the way to Alexandria. By the time they entered the town, they were “accompanied by crowds of contraband of every age and complexion who had joined the column.” It was an act of instant urbanization that would affect life and politics in Alexandria throughout the rest of the century. But most troublesome for the federals was the fact that the Red River proved to be even less cooperative in the retreat than it was in the advance. Because the water level was so low, the iron-clad and tin-clad gunboats now were trapped and could not go down over the rapids; but because the vessels could not be abandoned without “a stunning blow to Northern naval prestige,” movement of all the forces was delayed.

This predicament for the federal forces added yet another dra-
matic episode to Sara Ward Pembroke’s inventory of memories. Early in May 1864, word reached White Sulphur Springs that the Union forces were actually laboring round the clock to construct a temporary dam on the river, and that “many of the men, mostly colored troops, [were] standing neck deep in the water” as they worked. This astonishing piece of news brought thousands of spectators from far and wide, and they were able to observe the felling of pine trees, the sinking of barges, and soldiers and civilians scouring the region for heavy materials of any sort to accomplish the feat. Bricks and heavy timbers were torn from buildings, including the seminary in Pineville where Union General William Tecumseh Sherman had been superintendent just before his call to active duty; rails from a primitive railroad were ripped from their roadbed and the very engine and cars that traversed them were confiscated for the project.22

Spectators were stunned by the sheer audacity of the effort, and when the first of the heavy ironclad vessels eventually found a deep enough level to escape the shallows and reach easy water downstream, cheers of admiration resounded from the shorelines. But cheers turned to sorrow when departing federal forces set Alexandria ablaze.23 Most of the town was leveled.

For nine-year-old Sarah Ward, the burning of Alexandria was the climax of two years that had altered the only way of life she knew. The conflict had brought whites, free people of color, and slaves into association with each other in ways that broke down the “Black Code” of Louisiana, which had long set the terms for their social and legal conduct. The social chasm between free people of color and slaves now expanded enormously, especially as the hue and cry against slavery grew.24

The Black Code in part stipulated Catholic instruction and bap-

22. Ibid., 261–3; and Eakin, 39.
23. Johnson, 268–70.
tism for everyone; it forbade marriage or concubinage of whites or freeborn or manumitted blacks with slaves; and it fixed penalties for free persons of color who gave refuge to runaway slaves. The existence of such a code was testament to the anxiety aroused by free persons of color. As early as 1830 their numbers had increased to nearly 17,000 and they had reached a high social mark, “owning extensive sugar and cotton plantations with numerous slaves; maintaining thriving industrial and commercial establishments; practicing various trades and professions; and educating their children in private schools, through private tutors.” But in many locales, even such solid economic footing did not shield them from ordinances that interfered with their freedom. Several parishes, for instance, actually prohibited free persons of color, under penalty of a fine, from being in the company of slaves at any time. By 1860, after many had fled the state to reside more securely in the North or in Europe, there were still more than 18,000 free people of color in Louisiana. Their numbers then compared with more than 331,000 slaves.

The term free persons of color (homme de couleur libre or femme de couleur libre) broadly referred to any persons of mixed blood. Persons of presumed pure African ancestry were recorded simply as free Negroes (negre libre or negresse libre). And the term negre without qualification meant “slave” and would have so designated Charlotte Chlotilde and her first three children, including Sarah, all born before emancipation. Little matter that Sarah was in fact a mulatta, as were most of the free Negro people of Louisiana. It did matter, for the time being, that she was not born free.

It mattered too that a society of free persons of color took shape along rigid class lines consequent upon shades of complexion and, to some degree, the condition of hair. The lighter the color and the straighter the hair the higher the social status. Among people of color, this living dictum remained as insistent after the Civil War as before, a fact that must be borne in mind if we are to understand

25. Roussève, Negro in Louisiana, 22 and 44.
27. Roussève, 50 and 55.
Sarah Ward's adult social attitudes. At the bottom of this social hierarchy was the person of “pure” African ancestry, identified simply as a Negro. Such, perhaps, was the case of Charlotte Chlotilde and her children Philo Ward, Jane Brown, and Charles Green. The offspring of a Negro and a mulatto, on the other hand, was known as a “griffe” and stood a social notch above his or her pure African parent. The mulatto followed next in ranking, for he or she was the progeny of one white and one Negro parent. Sarah Ward and her brother Joseph Ward Jr. represent this combination. The offspring of white and mulatto parents were held in still higher order and were distinguished by the designation of “quadroon.” But most eminent of all was the “octoroon,” the child of a white parent and a quadroon. From this latter group one could pass from the status of “colored” to white.28

Many members of the Pembroke family of Rapides Parish appeared to be mulattos or quadroons. Their true origins are as shadowy as Sarah Ward’s, but in the main they reflected a mixture of Caucasian, Cherokee, and Negro. Nathan Pembroke, Arna’s great-grandfather, was usually taken as the patriarch of the family, meaning that he was the only clearly distinguishable progenitor. It was rumored in the family that he was himself the offspring of an eccentric steamboat captain and his slave mistress, that the master ate at table with his servants, and that he openly accepted his children by his slave mistress. Census records for Alexandria indicate that in 1870 Nathan Pembroke was a forty-one-year-old tenant farm laborer whose birthplace was the state of Maryland. Thirty-nine-year-old Betsy, who was born in Mississippi, appears to have been his wife. Six children are listed, but Joseph, Arna’s grandfather, is not among them.

Joseph Pembroke was born 27 December 1849, to Nathan Pembroke and a full-blooded Cherokee Indian woman whose name is now unknown. He was raised in the Methodist church by his mother. The 1870 census shows a twenty-one-year-old farm laborer named “Joe Pembroke,” residing in the Hines household at Alexandria, in all likelihood the home of his half brother Hogan

Hines. Along with the other members of that circle, Joseph is listed as a mulatto. He was swarthy, his hair was short-cropped and curly, his deep hazel eyes were intensified by generous eyebrows, and his broad forehead converged on a rather severe, Semitic nose. He was of medium height and solid build. Joe, as he was called, could not read and write, but he was known to be resourceful, frugal, and dexterous with tools. 29

Joe was thirteen when the federal troops first entered Alexandria in 1863, and he was thrilled by the excitement and disruption caused by the aggressive blue-uniformed soldiers. But the return of the Union forces the following year was, for Joe, a very different story. First, word that naval warships were making their way up the Red River with a vengeance excited concern that nothing would be spared. During this time, the town rapidly filled with fleeing slaves. Some were the most ragged and hapless field workers, others were mothers with two or three children in tow; most were black but many were of mixed ancestry. All were hoping to find freedom or refuge within the Union military garrison and none were turned away. Fifteen-year-old Joe Pembroke observed unselfish, humanitarian behavior by ragged slaves, by black and white military men, and by many of the local citizenry. He also observed, among those same groups, shocking displays of selfishness, greed, and depravity. At this early age, Joe Pembroke learned to judge men and women by their actions, a legacy he passed on to Arna, his first grandson. Nearly eighty years later, in an oblique tribute to his grandfather, Arna wrote of Henri Christophe, the Haitian revolutionary leader and king of Haiti, that “he had learned that there is a Cause that makes men brothers. He never seemed to believe . . . that being black or brown or white was in any sense a measure of one’s worth.” 30

The source of the Bontemps family baptismal records is St. Paul

29. The source of many of these family observations is Anna J. Stokes and her [September 1953?] letter (including photos of Joe Pembroke, Hogan Hines, and Mirra Hines Gla) to Arna Bontemps. Bontemps Family Papers.
the Apostle Church at Mansura, where the family first lived. It was this church on the Avoyelles Prairie, formerly Our Lady of Mount Carmel, that attended to Arna’s ancestors’ spiritual needs for at least two generations prior to the Civil War. Dark, straight-haired, French-speaking black men and women were “very common” throughout this part of Avoyelles Parish.

Indian inhabitants lived along the lower banks of the Red River when French exploring expeditions entered the old parish during the early eighteenth century. One explorer in 1718, for instance, described them as a friendly and generous lot, who brought them food and “brought the French in Louisiana horses, oxen, and cows.” It is unclear when the first white settlers established themselves, but the Avoyelles Post received its first commandant about 1780 and the first church, said to be located between present-day Marksville and Mansura, was not built until 1796. It is the same church in which Arna Bontemps’s ancestors were baptized.

Arna spoke of a legend in his father’s family that two Frenchmen came to the Louisiana Territory at the same time, and one of them settled in the part that is now Louisiana and one of them settled just across the river in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. The one who settled in Bay St. Louis, as the legend goes, had a white wife and raised a white family. It may very well be that the one who came to Louisiana did also. His name was Noel Bontemps. “Between my father’s best knowledge and my own putting together recorded data, the speculation is that he must have lost his [first] wife sometime after the birth [in 1824] of his daughter, because a little more than ten years later he gave freedom to one of his slaves named Pauline, and he lived with her thereafter.” The family legend, he resumed, described him at the time as an old white man. “Pauline had a son whose name was Hyppolyte, born couleur libre in Mansura on March 6, 1835. . . . This was my grandfather.”

The State of Louisiana had long since enacted provisions for dealing with the emancipation of slaves. Those statutes were

amended and tightened from time to time, for manumission usually required legislative approval by a police jury within the parish; but these laws did not govern the choice of surnames. Insofar as Arna Bontemps’s family legend is true, Noel Bontemps likely petitioned the parish for Pauline’s freedom; it was not unusual for a master who was cohabiting with a slave woman to do so, both for the sake of the woman and the resultant children. However, a white person who wished to leave a legacy to an illegitimate child had first to acknowledge paternity before a notary public in the presence of two witnesses. Such an act deemed an illegitimate offspring a “natural child,” as opposed to a “bastard.”

By 1860, according to the Louisiana census, there were at least three households of Laurens in the parish; two were mulattos, the third was white. In April of the next year, twenty-six-year-old Hyppolyte Bontemps married Euphémie Laurent. Witnesses to the ceremony were male members of the Laurent family, including Joseph, a forty-one-year-old mulatto carpenter, who owned land and personal property impressively valued at better than three thousand dollars, and his brother Louis, a brick mason. There were several carpenters and an equal number of brick masons among the adult males in the Laurent families at the time, a notable representation of skilled laborers for a single black family in a farming community. Hyppolyte too would be identified as a carpenter and property owner by the time of the next census. Such a concentration of artisans on the prairie may have been associated with the expanding cultivation of sugarcane in the region and to the south where the construction of sugar houses for refining required the skill of masons as well as barrel makers.

Hyppolyte Bontemps and Euphémie Laurent’s first child was a son born on the 11 November 1861. He was named Louis Fenelon Bontemps (probably in honor of his uncle) and he was baptized in St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church in Mansura. Three other sons and one daughter followed. Arthur was born one year later. Seven years passed and the Civil War had ended before Victor was born sometime during October 1869. Paul Bismark, Arna’s father, was

33. Sterkx, 118–23.
34. Ibid., 179.
born on 3 May 1872 at a small river port near Marksville named Barbin's Landing. The only daughter in this marriage was named Pearl. Euphemie did not survive this birth.

These Marksville-Mansura mulattoes were among the French-speaking free families of color who witnessed the military events up and down the Red River with profound apprehension during the spring of 1864. As dark descendants of “the émigrés who sought shelter under the tricolor of France” when the Union army passed on its way to Alexandria and on its return as well, they had a feeling of being spectators rather than participants in the conflict. They witnessed the skirmishes around Marksville, but were spared the pitched battles that left other communities in a shambles. Foraging troops were naturally unbiased about their sources of food, and one family was as susceptible to being robbed as any other. Furthermore, the fields were thoroughly trampled and a season of growing was interrupted. Thus, as some federal military observers admired the beauty of Avoyelles’ prairie lands, many locals—including Union sympathizers—in turn perceived them as they did the army worm that devoured the cotton plant: a temporary but inevitable infestation. Others worried about dangerously errant shells from the federal fleet that bombarded Fort De Russy, just three miles beyond Marksville. And everyone was frightened out of their wits in the dead of one night when someone “badly botched” the detonation of the Fort’s magazine and set off “an earthshaking roar.”

Just as some Union officers had noted, apart from its gentle, undulating beauty, emerging into the Avoyelles Prairie region around Marksville and Mansura was like entering an altogether different culture. Since most Catholics in Louisiana before the Civil War generally were found in south Louisiana, and the area north of the Red River was largely Protestant country, this part of Avoyelles represented a kind of religious as well as cultural buffer zone. The very existence of a church at Mansura testifies to the substantial presence of devout communicants on the prairie, and as scrutiny of its records reveals, extramarital unions between white men and

35. Johnson, 93.
36. Ibid., 92–4.
37. Ibid.
black women, similar to the examples we have seen among the Bontempses, had become commonplace. Add to this knowledge the fact that the Catholic church did not formally segregate black worshippers before, during, or immediately after the Civil War, and it appears reasonable to contend that the condition of free people of color here generated less antagonism than in other parts of the state or, for that matter, the slavery system in general. These “congenial” interrelationships would not last.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the war in this parish was the uprooting and dispersal of these proud people and their unique culture—a dispersal that proceeded inexorably into the twentieth century. By that time, in the Avoyelles prairie lands, the name Bontemps virtually disappeared into the phonetic hybrid “Bon­ttons.” Descendants of this branch still reside in Marksville and other parts of the Avoyelles Prairie under the “Americanized” spelling of the name. But by and large, members of the family eventually found their way to New Orleans, south to Big Cane or St. Martinsville, to Oklahoma, and to California. Some others would make a temporary interlude out of nearby Alexandria after Reconstruction. The records at St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Mansura note the death of Noel Bontemps sometime during the month of October 1880 at the age of seventy-five years.

Slavery was abolished in all of Louisiana in January 1864, but the force of the declaration was predictably uneven and unenforceable where Union troops did not maintain jurisdiction. More than a year would pass before the Appomatox Court House surrender on 9 April 1865. The end of the hostilities and the postwar efforts to adjust to a social order without institutionalized slavery exposed a tension between well-to-do former free persons of color and the greater population of freed persons, benefactors of the general emancipation.

It has been said that the slave family was the most unstable institution imaginable. Nonetheless, Charlotte Chlotilde was able to keep her family intact and to instill in them strong values, particularly her daughters Sarah and Jane. Despite her own experiences (or because of them) with the end of slavery, Charlotte Chlotilde inveighed against cohabitation and casual mating arrangements. She might have been aware of the 1865 Freedmen’s Bureau pamphlet *Address to Masters and Freedmen* that urged former slaves to contract legal marriages to support their families and to cast off slavery’s licentiousness and adultery, even though she could not have read it. But both of her daughters had reached attractive adolescence, and she was taking no chances.

Since Alexandria had rebounded remarkably from the devastation of the war, businesses were thriving along Second and Third streets, and housing was being constructed to accommodate a growing populace. Heavy steamship traffic up and down the river evidenced spirited competition. The farmers, who were able to shake off the two disastrous years of 1866 and 1867 when heavy flooding was followed by infestations of voracious army worms, were finding strong markets for their cotton.

Twenty-year-old Joseph Pembroke was himself farming cotton on the outskirts of town, where he occupied one of the five rooms in a house with a husband-and-wife team of tenants named Ambler. The young bachelor furnished the single room and the Amblers managed his board and kept house for him. During the growing and harvest seasons, he moved between the farm and a residence in town with the Hines family, his half brothers and sister. Over the previous two years, the middling price of cotton had been holding at the estimable figure of twenty-four cents a pound, but Joe knew that even if the price did not hold in 1870, he could look to the promise of a high yield per acre that would more than compensate for a

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41. Ibid., 85.
42. Taylor, 344–5.
43. Ruby Troy to Arna Bontemps, 13 October 1941 (Arna’s thirty-ninth birthday), Bontemps Family Papers.
price decline.\footnote{Taylor, 351.} This generally cheerful outlook, reinforced by the increasing value of land, gave Joe the security and confidence to propose marriage to Sarah Ward.

The planned match met with approval by family and friends on both sides. Despite her youth, Sarah did not approach wedlock lightly; the very marriage license symbolized her deep hunger for the stable family life her mother had been unable to sustain. For his part, Joseph attributed to Sarah “a typical nineteenth-century view of woman” that, according to Blassingame, was widely held in the black community: “Her gentle nature and ennobling spirit . . . were the major forces for good in society.” It was her destiny to “calm man’s savage nature and inculcate morality in his children.”\footnote{Blassingame, 87.} In essence, the wife was not only called upon to sustain the sacraments, she was charged with civilizing man and (notably) uplifting the race. Sarah was willing to embrace these provisions within limits and on modified terms, for she had her own ideas about what constituted uplift of the race—ideas that were based upon ancestry and the value of skin tone. Sarah gave ascendancy to her father’s culture, to his religion, and to his race. Therein lay a simple caveat that was to give many of Sarah’s own children and her grandchildren much unease: “Bring the family up, don’t bring it down,” by which she meant, \textit{Make sure that your children won’t be any blacker than you are.}\footnote{Arna Bontemps, taped interview by author, Nashville, 18 June 1971. This point was reinforced, with gentle sarcasm aimed at Grandma Sarah Pembroke, by Ruby Troy, Arna’s married sister. In a letter to Arna, dated 13 October 1941, in the Bontemps Family Papers, Ruby teases Arna about the work she did for his book: ‘I think when [your] book is written, after all my work, it should be dedicated to ‘My Darling Sister.’”}

These and similar sentiments were espoused by many people within Sarah and Joe’s circle of Creole friends. The observation that blacks with white forbears led a more privileged existence compared to their “pure black” counterparts was not new. Actually, the relationship between skin color and privilege appears to have emerged during slavery as an extension of the kinship bonds
Paul Bismark Bontemps and Maria Pembroke Bontemps with child Arna in Alexandria, Louisiana, ca. 1903 (courtesy of Paul B. Bontemps).
between mulatto children and their white fathers. Following the Civil War, elite positions in the black community depended strongly on family background, light skin color, and a heritage of freedom before emancipation. Generally speaking, then, fair-skinned blacks were granted advantages over other blacks in obtaining education, higher-status occupations, and property.

Shortly after her daughter's marriage in 1871, Charlotte Green brought the rest of her family from White Sulphur Springs and settled with her daughter and son-in-law in Alexandria. In time, Sarah's own children added to the extended family. Arna's mother, Maria Caroline, born in 1879, was the third offspring in a succession of five daughters and two sons. Before long, and probably with initial assistance from her mother, Sarah Pembroke managed a successful seamstress business out of her home. Joe abandoned farming and became an assistant to a white funeral director in town. By the early 1890s Sarah was able to purchase, in her own name, the very house at Ninth and Winn streets in which Arna and his sister Ruby were born. The seamstress business thrived until the family moved to California.

Maria was a delicate, fair-completed, and bookish young lady who eschewed work as a seamstress to become a school teacher. The circumstances under which she and Paul Bontemps met are unclear, but the DeLavallades of Avoyelles Parish were then living as neighbors of the Pembrokes at Ninth and Winn streets. The Bontempses and the Laurents, of course, were well familiar with this Creole family from the Mansura-Marksville region, and it is likely that Maria and Paul struck up an acquaintanceship through the common family association with the DeLavallades. Indeed, by this


48. Charlotte Chlotilde LaCrenton, from this point, was identified by the name Charlotte Green in the census and in legal documents, including the joint purchase of property with Sarah in Alexandria in 1883.
time Sarah Ward Pembroke and Emma DeLavallade were both friends and fellow business women.\textsuperscript{49} 

Paul was born in 1872 near Marksville at a small site known as Barbin’s Landing. He was a strapping young man, and with his rich dark complexion and his straight black hair, he was considered fine looking. He managed English with a heavy inflection, though he preferred his Louisiana French. By the time he met Maria, he was a trained bricklayer-stone mason and a part-time jazz musician.\textsuperscript{50} Both of these pursuits kept him in frequent motion throughout the Red River region and probably fostered his spirit of independence.

By the mid-1890s Paul Bismark Bontemps’s mother had been deceased more than twenty-five years, and his father had long since started a new family; his brothers had scattered throughout the state and his only sister had moved to Oklahoma. He was beginning to disengage from Catholicism, which, like the surrounding culture, had incorporated Jim Crow laws and other forms of racial insult. Fresh out of college, he was abandoning the now-inhospitable place of his birth. He typified the disaffected and dispersed Creole figures of the era, especially those who had spent several “privileged” generations in and around the Avoyelles Prairie region. The overwhelming condition of the moment was uprootedness—similar to what his yet-unborn son would feel during the summer of 1924 when he emerged from the subway at 125th Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem.

\textsuperscript{49} Mrs. Emma DeLavallade operated a successful millinery shop from her home. Both businesses catered largely to white patrons.

\textsuperscript{50} Paul mastered bricklaying and stone masonry at Straight University in New Orleans. The institution was chartered in 1869 and supported thereafter by the American Missionary Association (AMA). It’s not certain how long Paul attended Straight, but he probably left Avoyelles Parish for New Orleans sometime during 1886 when two of his brothers lived there. No doubt he learned to play the valve trombone and the baritone horn during this time. Jazz became the exciting avocation that he carried out with band leader Claiborne Williams, who worked the rural regions west of Baton Rouge. Perhaps it was the play of Arna’s imagination on this period of his father’s life that inspired the wonderfully haunting little tale for children about a lonely river boy from Barbin’s Landing who blew a silver trumpet: \textit{Lonesome Boy} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1955).
Peaks of Joy, Valleys of Despair: The History of the Syracuse University Library from 1871 to 1907

BY DAVID H. STAM

On 2 March 1995 University Librarian David Stam spoke to the members of Library Associates about the Library's early history. What follows is an edited transcript of that talk.

A FEW PRELIMINARY REMARKS before I begin my more formal presentation: First, I would like to note that today is the ninth anniversary of my arrival in Syracuse and the beginning of my own role in the history of this library. It is hard to imagine now what I might have expected then, but I must say that my sense of gratitude for my welcome and acceptance in this community is very deep. The experience of delving into the history of the library has increased my appreciation for all those who have made this institution what it is and has given me a heightened awareness of how many obstacles stood in the way of their endeavors to meet common and widely shared ideals of library service. It has also provided a humbling sense of continuity between the promise and problems of the past and those of the present.

Second, I would like to present my footnotes at the beginning by outlining the primary sources one must use to pursue the history of the library. Foremost is the three-volume history of Syracuse University.¹ Each volume includes a full chapter plus ancillary ma-

¹ W. Freeman Galpin wrote the first two volumes: Syracuse University: The Pi-
terials on the growth of the library, although they are progressively
more sketchy as they approach Chancellor Tolley's years. There is
an important master's thesis in history by Alicia H. Parry, approved
in 1952, which traces the history of the library during the period of
Chancellor Day's administration from 1894 to 1922. Another fine
contribution is a Library School paper (undated) by our late col­
league Marion L. Mullen, which gives a comprehensive overview.
Amy Doherty's relatively brief account prepared for the Encyclope­
dia of Library and Information Science, provides another useful epit­
one of the library's history. Standing behind all of these sources is
the University Archives; sporadic as they are, they provide not only
useful documentation of specific periods but often the flavor and
spirit of the participants in these struggles to meet the needs of fac­
ulty and students. My special thanks go to University Archivist
Amy Doherty and her staff for their help in preparing what follows.

Question: WHAT is history?
Answer: History, in the general sense of the word, signifies
a true relation of facts and events; or, considered in a moral
point of view, it is that lively philosophy, which, laying
aside the formality of rules, supplies the place of experi­
ence, and teaches us to act with propriety and honour, ac­
cording to the examples of others. . . . It opens the widest
prospects to the eyes of mankind, in the spacious fields of
literature, and is one of the most pleasing and important
objects of study to which the mind can be directed.

I make no such lofty claims for the following historical folly. The
above extract, however, serves to introduce the history of the Syra­
cuse University Library, taken as it is from the book which in 1871
started a collection which now numbers over two and a half mil­
ion volumes, and it is still one of them. The Daily Orange on 2 May
1933 reported that "the first book to be accessioned was Benjamin

oneer Days (1952), and Syracuse University: The Growing Days (1960). The third
volume, Syracuse University: The Critical Years (1984), based on notes by Galpin
and Oscar T. Barck Jr., was edited and revised by Richard Wilson. All three vol­
umes were published by Syracuse University Press.
Tucker’s *Epitome of Ancient & Modern History*, [Philadelphia] 1822 (see fig. 1). It is still on the library shelves and has never been taken out.” Until last week, when this researcher charged out the book, that statement remained true, but nonetheless the volume reveals a good deal of its own history here, reflecting that of the library itself (see fig. 2). You can see, for example, two versions of its original classmark, a fixed location notation (based on European classification standards) indicating the assignment of the book to a particular section (A), shelf (1), and number (1). You can see the results of the great reclassification debate of 1895 in which Chancellor Day first resisted as too expensive and then—with the encouragement of Melvil Dewey himself—consented to the shift to the Dewey Decimal Classification system, our primary means of locating materials until 1962. Yet to come is the volume’s re-reclassification to the Library of Congress scheme adopted in that year. Tucker’s work is but one of about a quarter-million pieces awaiting conversion at a current cost of about four dollars per title. Potential donors take heed.

On 17 September 1953 the book was charged out for mending, the only entry on an otherwise blank date due card. The primitive state of preservation practice in 1953 made that trip to the bindery a harmful one, the mending damaging the book and obscuring some of the text; as it so often happens, the road to preservation hell is paved with good intentions. Tucker’s next major journey was on 15 July 1965 when the volume was sent to “storage,” a polite euphemism for the notorious “Con Can,” the Continental Can building on Erie Boulevard (see fig. 3). It languished there for another decade before its return from the dead to the phoenix of Bird Library, where in the reconfiguration of 1991 it would have been moved at least three times before coming to rest at location 902.T891 in the lower-level compact storage shelves, sometimes known as Compost Storage. Its next destination will be the Department of Special Collections, for reclassification (yet again), preservation, and incarceration as protection for a university icon. (I should add that this is a very scarce book indeed. The National Union Catalog lists no copies, and the national on-line database, OCLC, lists only six copies plus a microfilm version at the Library of Congress.)
AN

EPITOME

OF

ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORY.

INTENDED FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

PART I.
ANCIENT HISTORY, SACRED AND PROFANE, FROM THE CREATION TO THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

PART II.
MODERN HISTORY, OR A CONTINUATION OF GENERAL EVENTS TO THE PRESENT TIME: WITH AN APPENDIX,
CONTAINING
Account of the Feudal System, the Crusades, Chivalry, the Reformation, and the Revival of Learning.

To the whole is added,
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF REMARKABLE EVENTS, &c. FROM THE CREATION TO THE YEAR 1822.

BY BENJAMIN TUCKER,
AUTHOR OF THE IMPROVED EDITIONS OF BLAIR'S GRAMMAR OF CHEMISTRY.

A NEW EDITION,
GREATLY IMPROVED AND ENLARGED.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY D. HOGAN, 255, MARKET ST.
J. Anderson, Printer.
1822.

Fig. 1. Benjamin Tucker’s Epitome of Ancient & Modern History, owned by Syracuse University Library.
In what context did these peregrinations occur? In brief outline, plagiarized from many sources, the seminal dates if not the peaks of joy of our title, were these: opening in 1871 in the Myers block at East Genesee and Montgomery streets; move to a back room of the third floor of the Hall of Languages in 1873; acquisition of the Leopold von Ranke collection in 1888, with completion of a new building to house the collection (the present Tolley Building) in 1889; Dewey classification system adopted in 1895, seven years before Syracuse adopted Melvil Dewey himself by awarding him an honorary doctorate; Audubon Elephant Folio acquired by gift from James Belden, university trustee, mayor of Syracuse, and United States congressman, in 1896; Andrew Carnegie’s grant for a new library building in 1905, with opening in September 1907; Library School established as an independent college in Carnegie Building in 1908; Ranke collection cataloged for the first time in 1913; campaign for a new library building begins in 1930s, promised in 1950s, and opened in 1972; transfer of medical library to the State University of New York in 1950; shift to Library of

Fig. 2. Location notations for Tucker’s *Epitome*. 
Congress classification in 1962, the same year in which Syracuse University Library became a member of the Association of Research Libraries; a quarter-million volumes sent to storage at Con Can in 1963 to relieve space crisis in Carnegie Building; beginning of pioneering library automation efforts in mid-1960s; opening of Bird Library in 1972; science collections housed in Carnegie Building (cohabiting with the Mathematics Department) and serving as hub of five science libraries; SULIRS, one of the first on-line catalogs in the country, goes public in 1979; opening of the Diane and Arthur Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive in 1982, following two decades of record collecting; Hawkins Building replaces Con Can as remote storage site, now used primarily for archival materials, in same year; reconfiguration of Bird Library in 1991; completion of William Safire Seminar Room in 1994; rediscovery of Benjamin Tucker's *Epitome* in 1995.
In that selective list what concerns us today is only the initial period, through 1907. Although the outline is fairly clear, the details shift in and out of focus as the documentary sources are alternately more or less complete. Little is known, for example, of John P. Griffin, appointed in 1871 as the fledgling university’s first librarian, but simultaneously as clerk and registrar of the university, in which capacities he served until 1875. When he moved a small but growing library of a few thousand volumes from downtown Syracuse to the pastoral Hill in 1873, the collection was housed in wire cages, the catalog locked in the Registrar’s Office (presumably in another location), and books could be used in the Library Room only, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The University Herald of 5 June 1875 dutifully reported that “Registrar Griffin visited Rochester University [sic] the other day for the purpose of inspecting the arrangement and index system of its library and was much pleased by them.” That report stated that the work of cataloging and indexing would be completed (“in a most convenient and novel manner”) before the opening of next year—the first of many such promises over 120 years, none of which has yet to be fulfilled. Classification issues have remained a major preoccupation throughout the entire history of the library, with many changes in standards and practice being dictated by local needs and national trends.

By the time of the fall opening Griffin had been replaced by the Reverend Charles Wesley Bennett, professor of history and logic, who also served part time as librarian from 1875 to 1884. Although his activities as librarian are sparsely documented, he serves as one of the heroes of this story. Originally on the faculty of Genesee College, our antecedent institution, he served the university from the beginning until he left in 1884 to join the faculty of Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois. In 1875 he took over a Syracuse University Library collection of 2,300 volumes and, according to Galpin, was “acutely conscious of the tremendous need for adequate library facilities,” no understatement in a decade when average annual expenditures on books and incidentals was $26.13.”

Bennett is credited with extending the library hours to 3 p.m., following considerable protest, not unknown in our time, by students dissatisfied with the paucity of library hours.

Bennett’s friendship with and cultivation of Dr. John Morrison Reid, a university trustee and former president of Genesee College, aided the struggling library in incalculable ways. Reid gave Bennett $5,000 for a European book buying trip in 1875 that added 4,500 volumes, tripling the size of the collection almost instantly. It was on the same trip that Bennett first learned of the possible future sale of the library of his former teacher, Leopold von Ranke. We need not dwell at length on the oft-told tale of that improbable acquisition, which placed Syracuse on the bibliothecal map, remains a useful asset to the university, and is a seemingly constant source of cataloging work. It is a tribute to Bennett that he helped negotiate the purchase of the collection during a European trip in 1886, two years after he had left Syracuse. Conspiring with Dr. Reid on strategy, Bennett met with Ranke’s son Otto and dealt with the Berlin agents, threatening in mid-course to withdraw the Syracuse offer, the exact extent of which is still unknown.

The collection actually arrived, all nineteen tons, in March 1888, four years into the obscure librarianship of the Reverend Wellesley P. Coddington, originally a professor of modern languages at Genesee College, but translated to professor of Greek at Syracuse in 1871. In addition to his part-time duties as librarian from 1885 to 1889, Coddington offered instruction in Greek, Hebrew, ethics, pedagogy, classical literature, and philosophy. He gave many books to the library and no doubt some of the library’s nineteenth-century strengths in classical studies stem from his period, but he left surprisingly little mark on the library in a period that saw the purchase of the Ranke library and the construction of a building to house it. Galpin speculates that “his work was overshadowed by the great achievement of Reid and Bennett in bringing the Ranke books to Syracuse.” Even Chancellor Sims seems to have played a minor role in that development, star status being reserved for Dr. Reid, who as trustee and member of the trustees’ library committee oversaw construction, provided funds for both collection and

building, raised funds from others, and appears to have worked closely with a succession of librarians. Most significantly, it was the stipulation, in his anonymous pledge of $10,000 toward the Ranke acquisition, that required the university to construct a separate fire-proof building to house the collection. The final legacy of Mr. and Mrs. Reid was a bequest of $100,000 to the university, intended as an endowment for book purchases, the fate of which is now a mystery.

With the appointment of Henry Orrin Sibley in 1889, Syracuse at last had a full-time librarian, though the first five years of his tenure included completion of his doctorate in classics. A late bloomer who graduated from high school at the age of twenty-five, he spent a decade as a principal of public schools and eventually graduated from Syracuse at the age of forty in 1889, the year of his appointment. Apparently a man of some independent means, a poet and translator of classical poetry, Sibley and increasingly his wife Mary (O'Bryan) Sibley presided over a very active period in the history of the library and university until her retirement in 1913, after nine years as acting librarian. The period included the adoption of Dewey classification, the moves into first the Ranke Library Building and later the Carnegie Building, the development of branch libraries, the establishment of the Library School, and the cataloging of the Ranke collection. When Sibley became a virtual invalid from diabetes in 1904, Mrs. Sibley was named acting librarian, the trustees and/or Chancellor Day apparently unwilling to name a woman to the permanent post formerly occupied by her husband, despite her clear competence and experience in the job.

For Henry Sibley’s main period of activity, 1889 to 1896, the University Archives has a fairly extensive file of his incoming mail; therefore, this is one of the better documented periods of early library history. Even this one-sided in-basket provides a good picture of the preoccupations of librarianship in the last decade of the nineteenth century, a picture changed today only in respect to technology, and in the number of staff available to carry out the tasks he covered. The correspondence deals with acquisitions, gifts, complaints, job inquiries and applications, interlibrary loan transactions, serial renewal requests, nonreceipt of promised materials, and
affairs dealing with the incipient Library School, which in effect Sibley founded. A few examples from these files are illustrative:

14 December 1892, Central City Bookbinding to Sibley: “We have some bills to meet this week & would be very grateful if you can oblige.”

4 April 1894?, New York State Association Opposed to the Extension of the Suffrage to Women to Sibley: “Accompanying this letter you will receive two volumes of pamphlets: these have been carefully prepared in order to meet the growing demand for information with regard to opposing the extension of the suffrage to Women. You will kindly accept them I trust. . . . (Mrs Geo.) W. Eleanor Phillips, Sec.”

11 May 1894, Boston Book Company to Sibley: “Dear sir:—Your letter of the 3rd at hand. We feel that from the whole tone of it that you will not be satisfied with the transaction. You feel that you are sacrificing for $1.00 volumes that are worth $3.00. And on the other hand that we are charging you 15c per number for filling only a portion of your defects in Harper’s. . . . Possibly it would be better to let the matter drop as we do not care to have any transaction that is not entirely satisfactory. We should like the Methodist Quarterly Review you offer and will ask you to quote us a cash price for the list. . . . Yours very truly, Fred. W. Faxon, Manager, Library Department.” [The name Faxon is famous to librarians over the past hundred years as the country’s foremost supplier of magazines, journals, and other serials up until its near demise in 1994.]

8 January 1895, The Brickbuilder to Sibley: “Dear Sir: In reply to your kind favor of the 4th we will say that we will certainly discontinue sending our journal to the University. We do not know why it should have been sent in opposition to your instructions, and certainly have no disposition to send our journal anywhere where it is not desired, in fact our entire circulation is among paid subscribers. We, of course, regret that you do not care to subscribe to us. We cannot understand just why, inasmuch as all the libraries of your class subscribe to us, sometimes to the extent of two or three copies, desiring us as a work of review and general information on the general subject of clay materials as used architecturally. How-
ever, doubtless many of the patrons of your library subscribe to us individually, or will do so when they find they cannot obtain us through your institution. If you will kindly send us the back numbers we will certainly be very grateful. . . . They are very valuable to us.” At some point that error was rectified, or at least countermanded, for we do have a complete run acquired later in hard copy and microform, as well as its successor, Architectural Forum.

15 March 1895, from Cornell University Library to Sibley: “Dear Sir: In an attempt to collect the names of works of fiction on American Colleges, I find that in one case I can not find any trace. About 1887, ’88 or ’89, I should guess, there came out in some magazine (more than one number or not I do not know) a work of fiction, I believe on life at Syracuse University. I have an idea the work was entitled A or The College Widow, but of this, too, I am not sure. Another peculiar thing I retain is that the volume is Blackwood’s, Blackwell’s, Blacks or similar name or else the cover of the number in which the work of fiction appeared was in pronounced black letters and artistic work on white or very light paper. This is all very uncertain in my mind, the only thing I am sure of is that some years ago I saw a work of fiction in a magazine on the life in some American College probably Syracuse University. . . . Could you assist me? Do not put yourself to any trouble . . . L. Nelson Nicholas, Asst. Lib.” Sibley could well have used such a classically ill-defined reference question in his introductory courses in library economy, along with other classic quests such as Darwin’s Oranges & Peaches and the works of Henry Gibson.

27 March 1896, Thomas Durston, Bookseller, to Mrs. Sibley: “Dear Madam:—On receipt of your letter this morning, I called up the errand-boy, and he says the book was delivered Feb. 18th: taken to the University Library building, and delivered to a fleshy gentleman with whiskers, which I suppose means Mr. Sibley. . . . [see fig. 4] The books must be in the building somewhere, or else some one has taken them away. They were certainly delivered.”

Around that time the file ends and we have no such sources for the remainder of the Sibleys’ regime. We can speculate that Durston’s errant books were symptomatic of the chaos that was prevalent in the Ranke Library during its early period. Here is
Galpin’s account from Dr. Bennett’s time: “If the complaints of one student in the *University Herald* be correct, things were pretty bad at times. When the librarian was busy elsewhere, students invaded the forbidden wire ‘cage’ where the books were kept; periodicals and newspapers were not returned to their proper places, and upperclassmen dumped their coats in the crowded reading room. Even worse, there was too much ‘vociferous soliloquy, boisterous conversation, or gymnastic creation,’ such as clearing two tables at a single bound, mimicking the cry of a savage [no doubt a reference to the Saltine Warrior]. The conduct of the gentlemen seems to have upset at least some of the ladies, one of whom protested that the men crowded them from the tables and even stared at them! Another complained that every morning after Chapel, the gentlemen were admitted to the library at once, while the ladies had to stand out in the hall exposed to ‘frightful din’ or even take refuge in the dressing room until the door on their side was opened.”

A few years later on 4 July 1891, Sibley, writing during his summer vacation in Royalton, New York, expressed to Dean of Liberal Arts John R. French his concerns about the state of the library: “The Chancellor said something before I went away about putting biology in the upper rooms of the library, I do so hope he won’t. Those great sonorous rooms—one can scarcely walk across without it sounds like the rolling of a cannon shot. The constant stream of students going up and down, with their talking & standing in the entry, would just about spoil the Library for reading & study. It almost made me sick when I heard of it. Ours is a great Library, it will be one of the best in this country. I firmly believe it, and to have something introduced that will just about spoil its efficiency is too bad. . . . The least word spoken in those upper rooms is heard as in a speaking gallery. . . . Students before & after class will be around in the rooms, not under the librarian’s authority & the noise made—the very thought of it appals me. I hope this will not be done. I must write a letter of protest. . . . It may seem that this is none of my business, but considering as I do that the very existence of my dept., its entire usefulness depends upon the absence of noise.

Fig. 4. Henry Orrin Sibley, Library Director (1889–96).
I can not but feel justified in protesting. Remember how the opening of the Ranke boxes disturbed you and imagine such a noise day after day, year after year. O please join me in protest. Sibley."

Crowding in library spaces for books, staff, and readers has been endemic throughout the history of the library. It is ironic that the expansion of the Ranke Library by the addition of a west wing was completed only two years before the beginning of Carnegie construction, work which Mrs. Sibley saw to completion and occupation in 1907 (see fig. 5). The best account of Chancellor Day’s indefatigable and ultimately successful pursuit of Andrew Carnegie is in Galpin, volume two. It almost didn’t happen. Chancellor Day’s emissary to Carnegie, the Reverend James D. Phelps, went to New York with instructions to ask for a chemistry building, but Phelps offered a choice between a chemistry building and a library. The outcome, knowing Carnegie’s penchant for libraries, would seem to be foreordained, and eventually Carnegie’s secretary wrote to say that Mr. Carnegie “will be glad to pay for the erection of a Library Building at cost of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars, provided the amount of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars endowment is raised towards the upkeep and carrying on of the Library,” a leveraging technique that Carnegie employed very successfully a few years later at the New York Public Library.

Matching funds were raised, Carnegie’s funds transmitted, and construction completed in 1907, slightly over budget. We need not be detained by the details, except to note the manner in which the “endowment” funds were used. The trustees approved the use of the endowment funds, provided primarily by John D. Archbold, to finance construction of Sims Hall as a residence for men, the income to be used for support of the library. The residence opened the same fall of 1907, completed at a cost of $115,000, and containing single and double rooms, a kitchen, and a dining room for 250 students. I have found no evidence of how or even if the income was ever designated for library purposes, and the investment certainly represents no part of the library’s current income stream, except perhaps by the most attenuated of trickle-down theories. Self-serving as it may appear, I would contend that the donor’s intentions were not honored, just as they were not honored with the
bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Reid. Several smaller restricted endowments from the early period, notably the Mace Fund, are still among the library’s discretionary accounts, but by some hidden acts of legerdemain the use of these larger accounts has been totally obscured by history.

There is an eerie congruence between the initial euphoria and the quick disillusionment that followed the openings of both the Ranke Library and the Carnegie Library, and perhaps in hindsight it will appear appropriate that the Carnegie Building was never dedicated. That event should now await the building’s eventual renovation as a twenty-first-century science library, possibly on the centennial of its groundbreaking. Although at the time of its opening the librarian of the University of Pennsylvania declared Carnegie to be the best designed academic library building in the country, the evidence of dissatisfaction is almost as long as the century and is included in each of the last nine reports of the Senate Library Committee, from 1986 to 1995. A few accounts of these valleys of despair should be evocative for those of you who knew the building and the ways in which it was used.
On 18 June 1946 the *Post-Standard* published brief recollections of Burges Johnson who served for a time as professor of English and director of public relations. Here is his account of Carnegie, taken from his book *Campus vs. Classroom*: “I met the chancellor [Flint] on the campus one day, and pointed to the library building which, built under Chancellor Day’s regime, happens to be one of the worst designed library buildings I have ever had the ill-fortune to see. ‘Chancellor,’ said I, ‘have I your permission to come up here some dark night with two sticks of dynamite and blow that building higher than Gilderoy’s kite?’ ‘No,’ said he promptly, ‘set fire to it, so that I can get the insurance.’”

Swinburne scholar Cecil Lang, newly arrived in Syracuse in 1960, told the *Daily Orange* “that he likes Syracuse very much. Even the weather doesn’t bother him very much, he added. What he dislikes about Syracuse most however, he said, is the library. The library facilities here are ‘abominable.’”

Perhaps that is unfair from someone who had spent his earlier academic life luxuriating in the libraries of Duke, Harvard, and Yale and eventually left us for the greener pastures of Charlottesville. Nonetheless, the comment is telling, as are those of Professor Emerita Mary Marshall who, despite her glowing accolades to the library, published in the *Alumni News* of March 1956, reports that the library on her arrival here in 1948 was simply unprepared to support the many graduate research programs then developing. Her view was that the practice of placing all book selection decisions in the hands of faculty was a recipe for disaster, especially in light of the faculty’s frequent failure to use all of the funds available.

Finally, poet Philip Booth in the *Daily Orange* of 24 September 1964: The better young teachers “are here on the assumption that the university is committed to becoming no less than first rate. . . . And, except for the library, the evidence has been all in that direction since I’ve been here.”

Before closing, I want to share the credo of Wharton Miller (librarian and dean of the Library School from 1927 to 1955), printed in the “Staff Bulletin” and presented to his staff in the midst of financial retrenchment in September 1931: “It must never be lost sight of that the Library exists to serve its public now and for all
time. It couldn't operate in a vacuum. In all smoothing out processes let that be held always in view. Time is never too short to help a student. No student must be turned away with an evasive answer. Library machinery must never interfere with personal contact between the Library and its public. Let the reader emerge.” That is as good a coda as I can find, especially in this year of the student, to define the predominating ethos of this library and its librarians over the past 125 years.
The Planning and Funding of the
E. S. Bird Library

BY JOHN ROBERT GREENE AND KARRIE ANNE BARON

I had never dreamed that a great library should bear my name.
—Ernest Stevenson Bird

The survey committee commissioned by Syracuse University found that Carnegie Library was “wholly inadequate in space for books and readers.” They also found that there was inadequate lighting, poor ventilation, bare walls, dangerous flooring, and dated equipment.

That survey was conducted in the academic year 1934–35.¹

Library renewal had long been a pet project of Chancellor William P. Tolley. In April 1958, on the first page of a new university publication—the Syracuse University Library Associates Courier—Tolley wrote that “it has long been clear that we must have a new

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Karrie Anne Baron, a senior at SUNY Geneseo, has been Professor Greene’s research assistant in the writing of Syracuse University: The Tolley Years, 1942–1969. She is studying to become a speech pathologist.

Note: This essay is adapted from Syracuse University: The Tolley Years, 1942–1969, to be published by Syracuse University Press in the spring of 1996. The authors wish to thank Amy Doherty and her staff at the Syracuse University Archives for their research assistance, as well as the late Chancellor Emeritus William P. Tolley for permission to use the records of his tenure, found in the Syracuse University Archives.

building. . . . Only a very ambitious program can assure a library adequate for the standing of this university."² During the first decade of Tolley’s leadership, this “ambitious program” centered on acquisitions. The holdings of the Carnegie Library had grown from approximately 417,374 volumes in 1955 to 522,549 volumes in 1960, ranking it fifty-second in the size of its total holdings compared with other college libraries in the country. By 1969 its holdings had increased 280 percent from its 1950 level—the fourth highest growth rate in the nation.³

Nevertheless, Carnegie, built in 1907, simply could not hold such a collection and adequately serve its clients. The venerable building shared with Hendricks Chapel and the Hall of Languages the distinction of being one of the most recognizable buildings on campus. But Carnegie had long been in a state of serious disrepair, and one 1968 estimate suggested that the building now contained twice the number of books and six times as many staffers as it had been intended to house.⁴ A short-term solution to these problems was a cumbersome system of branch libraries and storage annexes. Many of the older books were stored in the lower three floors of the old Continental Can Company building on Erie Boulevard (many a student would go to Carnegie, ask for a book, only to be told, “It’s in the can,” and could not be retrieved for a week or more).⁵

As a result, there was markedly little debate over whether a new library would be built; by 1961, it was an assumed fact. The actual financing and building of that new library makes one of the most interesting stories of the Tolley years. The process came perilously close to being a financial fiasco, but instead resulted in what many

⁵. Along with the approximately 90,000 cataloged volumes, and some 8,000 volumes listed by author only in Carnegie’s card catalog, the Continental Can Building also housed all of the manuscript collections that could not be accommodated in the Harriman Room at Carnegie, as well as the Order Department, the Gift and Exchange Department, and the Music Library.
observers call the crowning triumph of Tolley's chancellorship: the Ernest Stevenson Bird Library.

William Tolley's dreams for the growth of the university were enormous; his plans for the regeneration of the university library were no exception. Originally, he had planned for a system of libraries to replace the antiquated Carnegie building. The first of these new libraries would serve the needs of the constituency for whose sake Tolley had expanded the university in the 1950s—upperclassmen and graduate students. In April 1962, Tolley wrote to Wayne S. Yenawine, then serving both as dean of the School of Library Science and director of the University Libraries: “I am in agreement that we will have more than one library. . . . The first library to be built should be a library to serve the needs of our faculty and our junior, senior, and graduate students. . . . I am not out of sympathy with the idea of an undergraduate library. When that question is studied, however, we may decide that the best answer for freshmen and sophomores is a series of modest collections and adequate study facilities in each of our dormitory areas.” Unlike Carnegie, then, which was at that point largely an overstocked general library, the university's new library would be a modern research facility. Therefore, it would have to be a massive building, and none of the sites proposed to Tolley by his various planning boards suited the size of the building he had in mind. In the same letter to Yenawine, Tolley noted that he was not in favor of a location on the quad, largely because “it will be the most inaccessible part of the campus by automobile . . . [and] no one of the sites in the west quadrangle is large enough.”

Tolley began to look beyond the confines of the quad for a location for the library, and as a result he immediately clashed with fraternities and sororities, several of which would have to be relocated to accommodate the site. It was not until February 1967 that Tolley was able to announce to the University Senate his chosen site: the block of Walnut Park between the Lowe Art Center and the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity house. It was not the location, however, that bid most observers pause, but the size of the projected building

6. Tolley to Yenawine, 10 April 1963, Tolley Records.
and its cost. Tolley boasted that the new building (one of what Tolley originally envisioned to be three libraries—this large central library, along with a smaller undergraduate library and a separate building for rare books and manuscripts) would consist of a basement, six operational floors, and a penthouse, which would also house the university's George Arents Rare Book Room and Manuscript Collections. According to Tolley's first estimate, all this would cost the university approximately $9,835,000—a price that was growing with every day the university delayed the start of construction, as Tolley was quick to point out.  

The search for funds for the new library hardly began in 1967. Ten years earlier, tobacco magnate George Arents, who had funded the Rare Book Reading Room in Carnegie, had bequeathed $2,000,000 to the university, "which shall be used toward the cost of constructing and maintaining a new library for the university." Yet this was little more than a good start for a building such as Tolley envisioned, and the chancellor searched for other contributions. The need for a new library was a major part of the "Syracuse Plan," a fundraising campaign announced in the spring of 1961 that had as its goal $76 million to be accrued by 1970—the year of the university's centennial. On his list of needs that Syracuse Plan giving would cover, Tolley listed "Central University Library" for $8,000,000.  

Yet fund-raising monies could not be counted upon exclusively, and Tolley began to seek a name donor for the new library. His first quarry seems to have been former New York Governor Averill Harriman. In May 1964, Tolley wrote to Harriman, then serving as Lyndon Johnson's undersecretary of state for political affairs, asking him to donate both his own personal papers and those of his family to Syracuse University. In return, Tolley suggested the creation of "an Averill Harriman University Library which would house your

family papers as a part of our major research center in the field of public and international affairs and the humanities.” Tolley noted that while “governmental, industrial, and foundation resources are increasingly available for higher education . . . we must look for help to a few dedicated individuals. . . . We need your help.”

While the University would eventually acquire Harriman’s gubernatorial papers, he made no promise of a substantial monetary donation. Tolley would have to look elsewhere.

Ernest Stevenson Bird was born in 1894 on a farm near Andover, New Jersey. He graduated from Syracuse University in 1916 with a degree in Liberal Arts, where he had been a classmate and fraternity brother of Tolley’s brother Harold. Upon graduation, Bird taught math and science and coached at high schools in Ithaca, New York; Newark, New Jersey; and Wilmington, Delaware. After leaving the world of secondary education, Bird became a salesman for the American Book Publishing Company. At the time of his 1946 retirement from that same company, he was vice president in charge of sales.

Bird responded to Tolley’s “Syracuse Plan” appeal for monies for a new library. The original pitch was that if a donor gave a certain amount of money, he or she would get a deferred income from the university based upon the amount donated. This arrangement appealed to the seventy-three-year-old Bird, and he asked how much money he and his wife would get for a $10,000 donation. They then wrote the university a second time, mentioning a $50,000 donation. Now quite interested, Tolley dispatched P. Lachlan Peck, director of Deferred Giving Programs, as the university’s representative, to try to get a sizable donation from Bird. Peck was often accompanied by Horace Landry, professor of accounting, who would offer Bird tax advice about a possible donation. Landry remembered that “we began to realize that there was a lot more money in their estate. They didn’t have any children or family, so the university was Steve Bird’s first thought.”

ber 1967, largely due to the efforts of Peck and Landry, Bird pledged the assets of two of his investment accounts to Syracuse University. At that date, the accounts were valued at $2.5 million. For this deferred gift, the university was to provide the Birds a yearly sum of $224,000, or seven percent of the total of the portfolio, over their lifetimes; when they had both died, the university would be able either to spend or invest the principal.

At first, Bird made no stipulations on his gift, except for the annuity. Peck was the first to mention a use for the money—a student union building which Tolley had long been promising. But Tolley had other ideas. Five days after being apprised of the gift, Tolley wrote Bird that “your gift... will, I think, prove to be the largest ever given by a graduate of the University,” and suggested that:

I think both faculty and students, however, would agree that our major building need is a new library. It will probably cost about ten million dollars. We have some three million dollars in hand and we think we can get federal grants for about a third of the cost. We could also, if necessary, borrow from Federal sources as much as three million dollars at low interest. . . . No building will be more important or have a wider influence. I don’t think we need to settle this immediately, but I would hope that while you are alive and able to find pleasure in it you would be involved in the planning of the building to bear your name and could have the satisfaction of seeing it while you and Mrs. Bird are still here. Our problem is not so much to have cash in hand for construction as to know that it can and will be financed.

Bird responded with a letter of some warmth:

When your letter came I read it to my wife but the reading process was interrupted several times by the inability of my eyes to see and of my voice to function properly. Your letter has made me very happy and my wife very proud. . . .

13. Peck to Tolley, 4 October 1967, Tolley Records.
had never dreamed that a great library should bear my name. I am truly overwhelmed. . . . I naturally wish our contribution could have been larger and I am sorry the market chose this particular time to turn bearish.  

As the new year opened, the university had a promise of the largest gift ever given by an alumnus, and it seemed that Tolley would soon have his library. However, what had begun as a tremendous example of alumni largesse soon turned into a frustrating situation for all concerned. Despite his promise, Bird suddenly seemed unwilling to transfer his stock portfolio to the university. The January 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam had sent the stock market into a nosedive, and it seems that Bird was holding onto his portfolio until the market recovered so that he might deliver the total amount promised to Tolley. Concerned, Peck and Landry traveled back and forth to see Bird, hoping that they could cajole him into transferring the portfolio as soon as possible. Bird would not be rushed, but he was rankled by Tolley’s sense of urgency. On 16 January 1968, Bird wrote to Peck claiming that “I fear that you and Dr. Tolley wonder why I have delayed making the transfer and the longer the delay the more concerned I have become. I feel as though I were a pecan between the jaws of a nut cracker. I don’t particularly relish this kind of pressure—in fact, I’m not standing up to it too well. . . . the market is not doing what I hoped it would. I’m beginning to wonder if it will and when it will.”

Tolley quickly responded to his newest benefactor:

Lachlan Peck has shared your letters with me. I think I can understand the way you feel as the stock market reflects the bearishness of world and war news. Our concern is not about the value of the portfolio at the present time. I am confident that before the Ernest S. Bird Library is completed the market will be higher than it was six months ago. What bothers me is the possibility of severe shrinkage of the estate by legal and banking fees, [and] possible litigation.

and taxes by State and Federal authorities if something should happen to you before the transfer of securities is made.\(^\text{17}\)

Nevertheless, another month passed by, and the portfolio had yet to be delivered. Clearly frustrated with the situation, Bird wrote to Tolley in March, noting that it is “more of a worry giving away this money than it was accumulating it.” Bird also acknowledged making a mistake in not turning over the portfolio at the end of 1967, but he had “expected the customary rise in January and that never developed.”\(^\text{18}\)

Yet the status of Bird’s portfolio was not the only problem that Tolley was facing as he attempted to bring a new library into existence. Other events were converging on Tolley—many of them reflecting the passion caused on campus by the antiwar and civil rights movements—that are too detailed to be presented here. However, such events, and Tolley’s reaction to them, had led many arms of the university to nudge Tolley to retire in this, the twenty-sixth year of his chancellorship. Tolley knew that Bird Library would be his last physical contribution to the campus that he had rebuilt; the pressure was now on at least to have construction begun at the time of his retirement. Landry and Peck stepped up the pace of their negotiations. Landry remembers that “the last time that [we] were out there together we finally persuaded him that now was the time to do it. The market was in good health and rising. . . . He hit it right.”\(^\text{19}\) The transfer of Bird’s portfolio was finally completed on 23 April 1968. The total of the original gift was $2,903,400.82, which included a $150,000 gift from his wife. However, when Bird found out that the university’s press release had announced that he had given $3 million, he sent additional funds to make up the difference.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{17}\) Tolley to Bird, 29 February 1968, Tolley Records.

\(^{18}\) Bird to Tolley, 18 March 1968, Tolley Records.

\(^{19}\) Horace Landry, interview with Kame A. Baron, 29 June 1995.

\(^{20}\) Note, 23 April 1968, Tolley Records. Bird’s humility, despite the size of his gift, was genuine. He made it clear to Peck that he didn’t want to be mentioned as the name donor in any of the university’s press releases, and requested that the building be named the William P. Tolley Library—a request that Tolley denied. Horace Landry also remembers that when the press release announcing the gift
Yet even Bird's gift did not solve the university's financial woes regarding the embryonic Bird Library. The contract to construct the building was signed on 16 May 1969. The low bidder, Vincent J. Smith, Inc. of Binghamton, budgeted an amount of $11,690,000, some $1,500,000 above Tolley's estimated cost. But Tolley would not be slowed. At their June 1968 meeting, he told the board of trustees that "because we felt that any delay would only add to construction costs, we decided to go ahead. The unexpected additional costs will, of course, have an adverse effect on other construction urgently needed."21 During the 12 November 1968 board of trustees meeting, Tolley announced that he had all the money necessary to finance the new library, and the building would be completed in July 1971.22

The problem was that Tolley simply did not have all the pledged cash on hand to pay for the building. Though Ernest Bird died in February 1974, his wife lived until 1988, thus tying up the principal of the major gift for the library. Other major gifts to the library drive had also come unraveled. The gift of Florence Bailey Crouse, who had been a prime mover in getting other trustees to donate to the library, offers but one example of the troubles that Tolley faced.

identified Bird as the vice president of American Book Publishing Company, Bird protested, claiming that he had been "only a salesman." (Horace Landry, interview with Karrie A. Baron, 29 June 1995.)

21. Minutes, Syracuse University board of trustees meeting, 6 June 1969.
22. Minutes, Syracuse University board of trustees meeting, 12 November 1968. The library construction line in the capital budget submitted to the board on that date read:

| Estimated cost:               | $11,388,000 |
| Cash and Pledges:             | $ 6,675,205 |
| Construction Grants and Loans:|             |
| *Title I:                    | $2,491,264  |
| Title II:                    | $1,922,931  |
| Total:                       | $2,023,518  (awarded) |

*Title I award $1,670,923 to date—supplement application to be submitted after construction starts. Title II proposal increased from $1,281,954 to $1,922,931 with change of federal participation from 1/3 to 1/2 eligible costs.

Balance to Finance: ———

Remarks: Working drawings 70 percent complete; Bid 2/69; completion due 7/71.
Construction of E. S. Bird Library, 1970 (This and the following photo are courtesy of Syracuse University Archives).
In February 1968, the Internal Revenue Service refused to allow the executors of the Crouse estate to pay the $75,000 which she had pledged to the “Syracuse Plan” for the library. While the IRS recognized that she had indeed made the pledge, since it was not in her will, it was not an enforceable obligation.23

Thus, while construction began on Bird Library in the summer of 1969, several months after Tolley’s retirement, it was not entirely clear how the building would be paid for. Tolley’s successor, John Corbally, found that Bird Library was the most expensive of several buildings which were either under construction, or in the planning stages, for which funding was not yet complete. While Corbally did not serve as chancellor long enough to solve the problem, his attempts to do so were potentially troublesome. For example, Walter M. Beattie, then dean of the School of Social Work, learned that a $400,000 grant that had been given to the School of Social Work in 1962 by the Gifford Foundation to construct a building for his school had been given by Corbally to the fund to complete Bird Library.24 Despite such creative financing, it was left to Melvin Eggers, the university’s ninth chancellor, to deal with the almost $9 million in unfunded buildings; at that time the Bird Library was some $3 million underfunded. Eggers, who was committed to the completion of the library’s construction, financed the structure with short-term loans from the State Dormitory Authority and through some budgetary reallocation.25

The final cost to the institution for the Ernest Stevenson Bird Library was approximately $14 million. The funding was never completely attained until 1988, the year of Marie Bird’s death. Nevertheless, it is hard to disagree with Eggers, who contended that “the [Bird] library is Chancellor Tolley’s crowning glory. I will forever be grateful for his having gotten that building underway. . . . [It] was worth every cent.”26

25. Minutes, Syracuse University board of trustees meeting, 2 June 1972; Melvin Eggers, interview with authors, 21 June 1994.
Belfer Audio Archive: Our Cultural Heritage in Sound

BY JOHN HARVITH

On 28 April 1995 John Harvith delivered the keynote address for “Soundings: Exploring the Depths of the Syracuse University Library’s Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive,” a one-day symposium sponsored by the Syracuse University Library and the School of Music. Susan Stinson, curator of the Belfer collection, gave an overview of its resources, which include more than 300,000 recordings. A faculty-student panel, on the topic “Bringing Sound to the Classroom and the Classroom to Sound,” was followed by a second panel, “Breaking the University Sound Barrier,” featuring Chuck Klaus, senior producer at WCNY-FM, and collector Frederick P. Williams. Participants later toured the Belfer facility, after which Andrew Waggoner, director of the School of Music, and several music students made their own cylinder recording as they sang Syracuse University’s alma mater into an Edison recording horn. What follows is an edited version of Harvith’s keynote speech.

WHEN I WAS INTERVIEWED for my current position here in 1989, University administrators asked me why I was interested in Syracuse. They were taken aback when I responded without hesitation, “Because of the audio archive.” “You mean, it’s not because of our reputation in sports?” I responded that I had no interest in or knowledge of sports and asked in all innocence whether that was another element of Syracuse’s fame.

Normally, one doesn’t think of romance in connection with a

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recording archive, either. But in at least one situation I know of, this was indeed the case.

It all happened in the fall of 1965 at the recordings collection and listening room of Wayne State University in Detroit. A new undergraduate student at Wayne, I stood transfixed in front of a whole wall of 78 rpm albums, many of them rare, all of them items that I wanted to hear. As I gazed intently at the album spines, one of the listening room work-study interns stole silently behind me and spoke in hushed tones, as the room was filled with music students wearing headsets, listening to assigned LP recordings. “Those are 78s; the LPs are on that wall,” she whispered, pointing to the opposite side of the room, assuming that I was misguided. “I know they’re 78s,” I whispered back; “I’ve collected them for years.” She looked at me in amazement. Then she asked, “Who are some of your favorite artists?” “Well,” I answered, “Geraldine Farrar, . . .” but before I could go any further, she let out an ear-piercing shriek, and I immediately put my hand over her mouth. The whole room full of students stared at us, at first alarmed, and then annoyed. I led her out into the hall, discovered that Metropolitan Opera soprano Farrar was her idol, and that her name was Susan Edwards.

The rest was history, albeit slow-moving history. Eventually —after seven years’ worth of evenings and afternoons spent listening to old recordings, going to concerts and opera performances, and attending old films—we married and embarked on an adventure in joint research on the history of recording that resulted in the audiovisual exhibition, series of symposia, and book titled Edison, Musicians, and the Phonograph.

That love of and interest in music and recordings led us to Syracuse University some twenty-four years ago to begin our research.

Let us recall at the start that Syracuse has a long and distinguished musical pedigree: the first degree-granting college of fine arts in the United States and the nation’s first to grant a degree in music and require four years of study in both applied music and theory. Among the college’s early faculty was the highly influential musical pedagogue and author Percy Goetschius, who was given an honorary doctorate by Syracuse University in 1892 and went on to
fame as head of the theory and composition department of the Institute of Musical Art, which later became part of New York’s Juilliard School; Goetschius was followed at Syracuse by a stream of renowned faculty over the years, including William Henry Berwald, Arthur Poister, Ernst Bacon, Louis Krasner, Howard and Helen Boatwright, and Frederick Marvin, among many others; and such significant alumni as Donald Jay Grout (class of 1923), the eminent music historian, and the composer Carlisle Floyd.

In the 1960s, the School of Music administered the official university music program of the Chautauqua Institution, which I attended for two summers as a piano student. But the aspect of Syracuse University that meant the most to me was the archive headed by the renowned recording historian Walter Welch.

When Susan and I resolved in 1971 to pursue research on Thomas Edison and his recording company, the logical first stop on our odyssey was the Syracuse audio archive, then, in its pre-Belfer years, located in the basement of the Continental Can Company building. Although the atmosphere was dark, dingy, and cluttered, the collection was impressive and the insights provided by Welch unique. The collection had complete sets of the Victor and Columbia 78 rpm masterworks albums, but more important to us, extremely rare Edison Diamond Disc and cylinder recordings.

Although we were young researchers, still graduate students at The University of Michigan, Walter lavished a great deal of time and attention on us, outlining in painstaking fashion his methods for rerecording cylinders and Diamond Discs and explaining what made the Edison acoustical method of recording singular: Edison’s decision to have the recording studio acoustically as dead and non-reverberant as possible so that the singer’s or instrumentalist’s voice would emerge from the metal phonograph horn with a clarity “un-colored” by an acoustical space other than that of the room in which the recording was being played. This is why the Edison disc recordings sound so natural, unforced, and brilliant when played on a laboratory model machine from the period (ca. 1914–26). Our two-day visit with Walter also gave us an introduction to the remarkable, yet virtually unknown, classical recordings issued by the
Edison Company—recordings that only now are beginning to be discovered and appreciated by connoisseurs of “golden age” vocalism, pianism, and string playing.

At the time we began our research, major music critics and music historians looked at us as if we were just a bit daft. Now the issues of musical reproduction we explored and the Edison recordings of Claudia Muzio, Giovanni Martinelli, Jacques URLUS, Carl Flesch, and Rachmaninoff are being taken seriously. In time historians will look more closely at the Edison discs left behind by Frieda Hempel, Anna Case, Margaret Matzenauer, Karl Jörn, Elisabeth Schumann, and others.

Edison himself, as we discovered in the course of our research and revealed in our book, was a seminal figure in the history of recording. In addition to inventing the medium, he originated many of the attitudes and concepts tied inextricably to the process:

• the attitude that recorded performances have to be mechanically perfect in every way, even if this results in meticulous, but dull, interpretations;

• the concept of recording as a medium separate from live performance (“The phonograph is not an opera house!” Edison declared—he found stage personality intrusive and out of place on a recording). Edison personally selected repertoire and artists he deemed “suitable for the phonograph”—and there were plenty of artists and compositions he felt were “unsuitable” for the phonograph, from the vocalism of Conchita Supervia, Titta Ruffo, Tito Schipa, and Cantor Josef Rosenblatt to works by Mozart and Debussy;

• the concept of utilitarianism in music, a concept later translated into MUZAK, and a concept that Edison introduced in 1921 with a booklet on mood music—getting music to work for you, as the booklet put it—in order to induce moods that could give more energy, soothe raw nerves, bring peace of mind. Photos exist showing an Edison phonograph in the workplace used to improve worker productivity, just as MUZAK is used today;

• the concept of longer playing times on recordings, to allow for
uninterrupted recorded performances of lengthy compositions (Edison introduced the first commercial long-playing record in 1926);

- the concept of lip-synching, which can be traced back to Edison’s “tone tests,” where a performer on the concert stage sang or played in public in tandem with one of his or her Edison recordings, imitating the phonographic reproduction of his or her voice and then ceasing to sing or play while the recording continued to play alone (this done to demonstrate the superiority of Edison recordings).

Our example of research at the audio archive only scratches the surface of what can be done with this world-class cultural resource, however, since the Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive is truly a sleeping giant on this campus.

Because recording is and always has been a commercial medium, some recordings were only made privately, as airchecks, or as test pressings, while other historically significant recordings have remained in print only as long as they have retained their commercial viability. Even with the explosion of reissued material brought out on compact discs, only a small fraction of the last 100 years’ worth of recordings is available to us on the open market or in libraries—and that includes the collections of virtually all the great colleges and universities. I know this from experience. Because each time a sea change in recording medium takes place—from cylinders and 78s to LPs and reel-to-reel tapes to cassettes and CDs—public libraries, as well as those of most colleges and universities, jettison their collections to embrace the latest technology. As a student in the 1960s I watched this happen as the libraries of Wayne State University and The University of Michigan put out 78s on tables for students and faculty to take or throw away. Now LPs are suffering the same fate.

And the record companies can be—and have been—just as cavalier about their old recordings, not seeing them as cultural assets, but rather as economic burdens once they cease to sell in large enough quantities. Columbia Records, for instance, threw out its corporate collection of 78s once its introduction of the LP con-
quered the market. When CBS wanted to reissue in the 1970s some of the greatest 78 rpm performances of the 1930s by violinist Joseph Szigeti and the Budapest String Quartet, for instance, it had to rely on private collections to provide the source materials it needed to make the reissues possible.

Should the record companies now decide to discard their file copies of LPs, thinking that tape and CD copies of these materials are sufficient, they may again be throwing out their heritage, because we know that LPs have a long life span; no one knows how long CDs will last, and tapes have a short life span.

This is the fallout from being dependent upon a commercial industry for the preservation of our cultural heritage in sound. And this is why the Belfer collection is an irreplaceable treasure.

What is another reason for this archive's significance? It brings history to aural life.

One of the most memorable things anyone has ever said to me about music came from musicologist James Hepokoski, formerly of Oberlin College, now at the University of Minnesota. What Jim said was both incredibly simple and profound: Music of the past tells us what it felt like to live during the period when it was created.

The Belfer archive allows us to feel this sense of history even more vividly, because we can hear what musicians, artists, authors, actors, statesmen, politicians, and other historical figures actually sounded like. This is emotional, visceral communication that goes far beyond the power of the printed page. And some of this is information available nowhere else—it is locked in this building as an intellectual trust for future generations. As pianist-composer Abram Chasins said in our book, “Recording has done for music and musicians what the printing press did for literature, nothing short of that.” But only, I might add, if those recordings have been preserved and are accessible.

In the case of the archive, this means that there are vistas of untapped historical material waiting for scholars to investigate—untold numbers of master’s theses, doctoral dissertations, books and articles to be written, and courses to be taught not only in music, but in the history of photography, film, and theater; American political history; communications history; sociology; anthropology;
the history of technology; engineering; the physics of sound; African American and Latino studies; and popular culture. There is work to be done on the private recordings of film composer Franz Waxman, recorded interviews with Margaret Bourke-White, racist coon songs and crude humorous monologues preserved on turn-of-the-century Edison cylinders, ethnic recordings from early in the century, World War II news broadcasts, the sole cylinder purported to be by the great soprano Adelina Patti in her prime, recordings by presidential candidates in 1908, test pressings by Lotte Lehmann and Arturo Toscanini, little-known jazz and popular music recordings that represent the only way this music has been preserved. These are but a few of the many topics that wait to be explored.

One vast area of personal interest that pertains to all of this is oral history. Our Edison book is, in effect, an oral history of the phonograph from the time of Edison to the age of the CD. We set out to record the feelings, attitudes, experiences, philosophies, and factual reminiscences of major and minor recording figures—performers, composers, producers, engineers.

What do musicians, engineers, and producers have to say about their recordings and how recording technology has affected music-making? Do recordings really reproduce the concert experience? Can they? Should they? Are they reliable documents of a musician’s artistry? What about the ethics of editing? What is there to say about recent technological developments that make it possible for famous artists to add their vocal solos one at a time and miles apart in creating “layered” performances? What of other developments that make it possible for audio consumers to sit at home and alter interpretations of recorded repertoire digitally to suit their own fancies?

Much more work in this area of oral history remains to be done, because the march of technological development in recording history stops for no one—and our students can be trained in this area of historical research.

Nor should collected oral histories be limited to the topic of recording. Strenuous efforts could be made to collect the reminiscences of emeriti faculty, administrators, and staff about the cul-

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tural, social, and intellectual past of this great institution before that information is lost forever.

This impressive collection—the largest university sound archive in the United States and the largest commercial cylinder collection in the nation—can be harnessed to the investigation of performance practice in this century. One of the major preoccupations of the last quarter of this century has been with so-called “historically informed performance,” trying to recreate period styles of performing music.

In teaching music performance, music history, and music criticism, older recordings perform a unique service: they can tell us how a particular artist performed a particular piece of music at a particular point in time.

But just as one had to exercise uncommon judgment in interpreting pronouncements by the Delphic Oracle in ancient times, one has to be very careful in interpreting exactly what these recordings mean, if one intends to use them to divine what performing styles were like in the last century or early in this century. It’s all too easy to take older recordings of Mozart, Mahler, or Tchaikovsky that sound bizarre to our ears and make the logical leap that because this is an old recording by a musician who enjoyed a large reputation in his or her day and because the interpretation sounds so foreign to our way of doing things today, this must be the way this music was performed generally in an earlier era.

It’s a little bit like a physical anthropologist trying to construct a complete skeleton of one of our primate ancestors from the discovery of a single tooth.

Music is one of the arts, not one of the sciences. This area is one in which a great deal of knowledge of older recordings is called for, as well as a background in the oral and written historical record.

There is a whole school of thought, for instance, bestowing legitimacy upon the bizarre interpretive touches that celebrated conductors Wilhelm Furtwängler and Willem Mengelberg applied to standard repertoire in their recordings from earlier in the century, believing that these odd-sounding interpretations somehow stem directly from “authentic” nineteenth-century performances. This is where supplementary reading will help to explain what one hears in the old recordings at Belfer.
One hundred years ago, legendary conductor Felix Weingartner wrote his brief but illuminating book *On Conducting*. In it Weingartner explained that the celebrated pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow (1830–1894) in 1880 created a phenomenal stir in the musical world with his Meiningen Orchestra, producing with this touring ensemble a technical finish, precision, and balance unknown before that time; with it, however, came a capriciousness and exaggeration in interpretive style that intensified over the years and subverted the character and meaning of the compositions he conducted.

Because of von Bülow’s fame and technical powers in music, Weingartner wrote, he was imitated by other conductors, who constantly modified tempo, inserted unwanted pauses in musical lines, brought out unimportant inner voices, and in other ways distorted works in order to call attention to themselves, out of vanity. Before von Bülow, according to Weingartner, conductors were metronomic; Wagner tried to introduce a certain modicum of natural flexibility in meter; von Bülow distorted this plasticity out of all proportion.

By the musical examples Weingartner provided in his book, one can recognize the types of distortions one can hear in the Mengelberg and Furtwängler performances in the archive’s collection. And by listening to Albert Coates’s 1920s Beethoven symphony recordings in Belfer one can hear the kind of metronomic orchestral performances Weingartner also described. By listening to early orchestral recordings from the 1920s and 1930s by Karl Muck, Weingartner, Bruno Walter, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Toscanini, one can hear conductors with musical roots in the nineteenth century who obviously rejected the kinds of interpretive devices introduced by von Bülow late in the nineteenth century. The actual recordings bring this sort of information to life.

But you won’t gain such knowledge merely by going to the library and checking out a book or going to your local record store; these nuggets of information can only be found by doing research in a collection as comprehensive as that of the Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive—which is what makes it one of the unique and invaluable foundations of Syracuse University’s greatness.
As Maurice Maeterlinck wrote about recordings in 1928, “The greatest masterpieces of human genius lie from this day forward in a few discs, heavy with spiritual secrets, that a child of three can hold in his little hands.”
Standing Where Roads Converge: The Thomas Merton Papers at Syracuse University

BY TERRANCE KEENAN

The late novelist Donald Braider once referred to Thomas Merton as “Tom the Talking Trappist.” Certainly, for a monk cloistered in the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky for nearly twenty years, he had a lot to say. It is hard to overestimate his influence as a spiritual writer; his first book, the 1948 autobiographical story of his conversion, Seven Story Mountain, is still in print.

In the few years before his untimely death in 1968, Syracuse University Library staff corresponded with Merton and received as a gift a small collection of papers from his last important period, in which he explored the spiritual traditions of other faiths in considerable depth.

Merton was born in France in 1915. As the son of an English artist, he had an itinerant and bohemian childhood. He attended various schools in France, England, and the United States, receiving his B.A. (1938) and his M.A. (1939) from Columbia University. During his years of teaching English at Columbia University and at St. Bonaventure University he endured a spiritual crisis that led to his profound conversion from atheist to Roman Catholic. In 1949 he entered the Trappist, or Cistercian, monastery and was ordained Father M. Louis that same year. Merton served as master of scholastics and later as master of novices.

Most of his writing dates from these years. To one of his many correspondents he suggested that his writing can be divided into

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three periods: from 1938 to his ordination in 1949, “when I sud-

denly got to be well known, a best seller, etc.”; a middle period
lasting “until somewhere in the early sixties,” ending with “Dis-
puted Questions,” in which he wrote as an apologist for the revital-
ized Church; after which he, “opened up again to the world,” with
works like Wisdom of the Desert, Conjectures of a Guilty By-Stander,
and Chuang Tzu. The Syracuse holdings come from this last pe-
riod, in which Merton believed he was “evolving further with
studies on Zen and a new kind of experimental creative drive in
prose, poetry, and satire.”

Merton wrote several popular books for New Directions, Har-
court Brace, and Farrar Straus and numerous articles for such pub-
lications as Commonweal, Blackfriars, Catholic Worker, Harpers,
Saturday Review, and the Sewanee Review. The range of journals and
presses publishing his work is an indication of his scope, accessibil-
ity, and seriousness.

Among the Merton Papers (1960–68) at Syracuse there is a small
batch of outgoing correspondence, most of which should be con-
sidered “open letters,” which he prepared for general circulation
because he received many similar requests for advice or informa-
tion on spiritual, personal, and even political issues. There are tran-
scriptions of interviews, reproductions of some of his art work,
several published essays, prefaces for books, and other printed writ-
ings. Of special interest are ten spiral notebooks, simple school
copybooks, which contain handwritten notes from his readings of
Simone Weil, Rainer Maria Rilke, Meister Eckhart, Marshall
McLuhan, Jean-Paul Sartre, Franz Kafka, William Faulkner, and
others. He also jotted reminders of special projects, drafts of poetry,
and other items. The combination of published essays and letters,
along with the notebooks from the same period, yields rewarding
insights into Merton’s eclectic and energetic mind. He tends to go
all over the territory of Western culture to make his points. The
notebooks show the sources of his ideas and the range of his interests.

Among the published essays is an offprint from The Lugano Re-
view entitled “The Zen Koan.”1 In it Merton reviews two books,

127–8.
The Three Pillars of Zen by Phillip Kapleau, and The Zen Koan by Ishshu Miura and Ruth Fuller Sesaki. He seeks a fundamental ground of insight common to both Christians and Buddhists, while explaining a concept, the koan, that has a vague and slippery reputation in the West. A famous example is Hakuin Ekaku Zenji’s “If you know the sound of two hands clapping, show me the sound of one hand clapping.” Merton writes:

The Zen experience is first of all a liberation from the notion of “I” and of “mind”, yet is not annihilation and pure unconsciousness (as Westerners sometimes imagine “Nirvana” to be). It is on the contrary a kind of super-consciousness in which one experiences reality not indirectly or mediately, but directly and in which, clinging to no experience and to no awareness as such, one is simply “aware”. This simple “awareness” or “awakeness” is in fact the true identity which the Zen student seeks and for which he so to speak immolates his superficial empirical consciousness, his ego-identity, by means of the Koan. In the book on the Zen Koan we find in fact that certain types of Koan are considered appropriate for different steps of this deepening. Hence, it would be superficial to suppose that Zen study ends when one has attained a first satori, “enlightenment” (kensho). Enlightenment in this sense of a new identity and awareness is not the end but the serious beginning. (127)

The practice of Zen aims at the deepening, purification and transformation of the consciousness. But it does not rest satisfied with any “deepening” or a superficial “purification”. It seeks the most radical transformation: it works on depths that would seem to go beyond even depth psychology. It has, in other words, a metaphysical and spiritual dimension. (128)

Contrasting these thoughts with Western philosophies of life, Merton adds:

Such is the project which the Western mind instinctively
sets itself in life. A man sets his mind on something, he uses his will and energy to get it, and when he has it he keeps it, enjoys it, rests in it, if necessary protects it. Happiness consists in the full conscious certitude that he has in fact attained what he sought, that it is and remains his possession. But the basic tenet of Buddhism is that an identity built on this kind of consciousness is false. (129)

To show that this external self-affirmation leads to a metaphysical conflict that is fundamental, he draws on St. John of the Cross, Rilke, and even cave art. He quotes St. John: “The darkness which the soul here describes relates, as we have said, to the desires and faculties, sensual, interior and spiritual, for all these are darkened in this night as to their natural light, so that being purged . . . they may be illumined” (131). Later he quotes from Rilke’s Eighth Duino Elegy: “Always facing creation, we perceive there / only a mirroring of the free and open / dimmed by our breath.” Rilke presses the point further:

And we, spectators, always, everywhere, looking at, never out of, everything!
It fills us. We arrange it. It collapses.
We rearrange it, and collapse ourselves. (132)

“This,” Merton says, “throws an admirable light on the ‘pure consciousness’ of Zen, the consciousness that has not fallen into self-consciousness, separateness and spectatorship” (133).

To explain “seeing” directly and intimately, rather than as a spectator, he turns to cave art:

The extraordinary vitality of cave art springs from the realization of seeing. Cave art does not tell us merely what a bison looks like (there is all the difference in the world between a cave painting and a photograph). This is not the bison of the zoologist, nor is it simply the bison of a supposed (and utterly non-existent) self-conscious paleolithic man who dwells on the fact that he likes meat. Cave art neither represents the object, nor expresses the reaction of

2. St. John and Rilke quoted in Merton, “The Zen Koan.”
the subject: it celebrates the act of seeing as a holy and transcendent discovery. (135)

Merton is suggesting that this is the effect koan training has on the Zen student, providing a means to transcend the ordinary duality or “us” separate from “them” within which our everyday minds function.

At one point, as he is reflecting on Rilke’s poems, he says: “This unusual ability to yield himself to the object and submit to its ontological and poetic splendor made Rilke very vulnerable.” By turning to the notebook for 1965–66 (some of which is in French, since he used both languages with equal facility) we find on the first page: “Because of his [Rilke’s] own extraordinary capacity for ‘inseeing’, for divining the heart of being, he felt extremely vulnerable to others, easily confounded by love—and probably also by a knowledge of his own relative incapacity to really respond and really give love.” Here we see an author taking his own speculations on another writer’s emotional life and extending them into a larger understanding of Rilke and his relevance to our understanding the dark nights of our own souls, our separateness from one another. Without the notebooks, this link, this jump of intuition by Merton, would be lost.

These elements (Rilke, St. John, cave art) are all marshaled to explain the inexplicable. It must be remembered that Merton takes on any topic with equally broad enthusiasm. Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism in particular, are often misunderstood in the West. Witness how Pope John Paul II says in his book Crossing the Threshold of Hope: 3 “The ‘enlightenment’ experienced by Buddha comes down to the conviction that the world is bad, that it is the source of evil and of suffering for man. . . . To save oneself means, above all, to free oneself from evil by becoming indifferent to the world, which is the source of evil.” 4 Merton not only clarifies the issues; he places them into significant relation to Christianity and especially the contemplative tradition:

3. Published by Knopf in 1994.
The final awakening of Zen consciousness is not simply a loss of self, but the finding and gift of self in and through all. . . . The importance of this Zen intuition of reality is, in my opinion as a Catholic, its metaphysical honesty. It refuses to make a claim to any special revelation or to a mystical light, and yet if it is followed on, in line with its own vast and open perspectives, it is certainly compatible with a revelation of inscrutable freedom, love and grace. 5

We come away from writing such as this informed, invigorated, and with a glimpse of a sensibility that runs deeper than dogma.

News of the Library
and of Library Associates

POST-STANDARD AWARD CITATION, 1995

For Daniel W. Casey

We honor Daniel W. Casey as a lifelong champion of all libraries and a friend of the Syracuse University Library in particular. For nine years, until his death on 13 March 1995, Mr. Casey was a loyal board member of Syracuse University Library Associates.

After graduating from Niagara University in Niagara, New York, Mr. Casey practiced journalism, advertising, public relations, and television broadcasting. The central passion of his life was, however, libraries.

Forty years ago the mayor of Solvay appointed him to the Solvay Public Library board of trustees. From there he branched out, serving at various times on almost fifty library boards and committees. He will be missed by Syracuse University Library Associates, the Onondaga County Public Library, the Central New York Library Resources Council, the New York Library Association, the New York State Governor’s Commission on Libraries, the American Library Association, the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, the United States National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and many others.

He gave to Library Associates the benefit of his knowledge and helped build bridges between the University Library and other libraries in the county and state. Recently, he purchased for Library Associates a membership in the New York Library Association.

Mr. Casey was an extremely effective advocate. By all accounts he had an amazing ability to influence legislators; three presidents asked for his advice; and so many organizations depended upon his help. Certainly with his professional background he knew how to communicate a message and how to bring about change. A glance at his opened calendar revealed what may have been the greatest
secret of his success: the pages were filled with library-related appointments, from morning till night. In his quiet but earnest way he would describe some recent conquest in an endless crusade.

In recognition of Daniel Casey's extraordinary achievements and in gratitude for his friendship, we are pleased to present to his son, Daniel Casey Jr., the 1995 Post-Standard Award for Distinguished Service to the Syracuse University Library.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Research and Design (REDE) Institute

The collection consists of drawings, photographs, reports, and other documents of the first nonprofit design research institute in this country. Strongly supported by Jacqueline Kennedy, it focused on economically stressed urban New England. Between 1963 and 1976, the Institute studied human behavior and, on that basis, proposed design solutions to improve the efficiency of
schools, hospitals, and other social settings. Ideas now common, but then radical and new, such as open (i.e., without walls) schools, open hospitals, or recycled nineteenth-century industrial buildings were begun through the REDE Institute. The collection was a gift of Ronald Beckman, former executive director of the Research and Design Institute and current associate professor of industrial design at Syracuse University.—By Terrance Keenan, Special Collections Librarian, Syracuse University Library.

Virginia Insley Collection on Public Health Social Work

The collection contains writings by pioneering public health social worker Virginia Insley, as well as books and papers. Between 1973 and 1980, Insley was chief of the Medical Social Work Section of the United States Children’s Bureau, Division of Health Services; chief of the Medical Social Work Section of the Maternal and Child Health Services of the United States Public Health Service; and chief of Medical Social Work for the Bureau of Community Health Services, United States Public Health Service. In the collection, there are more than 200 volumes, as well as reports and correspondence related to the development of the social work profession in public health, maternal and child health, and training in these areas. The collection was a gift of Virginia Insley.—By Mark F. Weimer, Curator of Special Collections, Syracuse University Library.

Donald C. Stone Papers

The papers include correspondence, writings, and memorabilia of Donald C. Stone (Syracuse University class of 1926), one of the first graduates of the Maxwell School. Stone has been a distinguished public administrator and a pioneer of scientific management applied to public affairs. President of Springfield College (1953-57) and founding dean of the Graduate School of Public Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh, Stone has also served as consultant on organization, administration, and programs to 75 cities, 9 counties, 11 states, 18 federal agencies, 24 foreign countries, 7 international organizations, and a dozen universities. The collection provides a window on the workings
of the FBI, the WPA and other New Deal agencies, the Executive Office of the President, the Marshall Plan, the United Nations, and UNESCO. The collection was a gift of Donald C. Stone and his children.—By Paul Barfoot, Manuscripts Processor, Syracuse University Library.

FROM THE COLLECTIONS

Two Poems by Robert Southwell

The Department of Special Collections holds a commonplace book, dated 1624, which contains thirty-seven poems by the English martyr Robert Southwell. Two of the poems apparently have never been published, though they were privately printed and distributed as Christmas gifts by Lena and George Arents in 1949.

A commonplace book is a combination journal and notebook in which the owner jots down thoughts, quotations, and other useful information. In this case the owner was a young Oxford student, Thomas Read, of Magdalen College. The manuscript also contains Read's speculations about soldiery and warfare; however, it is the poetry that makes it unique, considering that none of Southwell's poems were published until 1630. Read's sources for the poems are not known.

Robert Southwell was born in 1561 in Norfolk, England, to a respected, albeit Catholic, country family. Although educated in Jesuit schools abroad, he returned to England after being ordained a Jesuit priest in 1586. At that time it was treasonous for an Englishman to be ordained a Catholic priest; he was, in fact, arrested in 1592.

Between his arrival in England and his arrest Southwell wrote all his poetry. This work is animated by a desire to show that poetry can be used for religious purposes; it is marked by unsentimental religious passion. Although his education was largely in Latin and Italian, he used the rich vernacular mode of the English love poets of his time in writing his devotional poetry. The price he paid for his devotion was three years of torture and starvation, ending on the scaffold in 1595.
The commonplace book was donated by George Arents in 1973. Following are the two poems that do not appear in the definitive Oxford edition of Southwell’s works.*

Of Xt [Christ]
Loues sweetest mark, lawdes highest theme,
mans most desired light,
To loue him, life: to leaue him, death:
to liue in him, delight.
Hee mine by gift, I by his dept,
thus each to other’s due,
First frend he was, best frend he is,
altimes will try him true.

Though young, yet wise, though smale, yet strong,
though man, yet god he is,
As wise, he knowes, as strong, he can,
as god, he loues to blisse.

His knowledg rules, his strength defends,
his love doeth cherish all,
His birth our ioy, his life our light,
his death our end of thrall.

Alas, hee weeps, hee sighes, hee pants,
yet doe his angells singe:
Out of his teares, his sighes & throbes,
doth bud a joyfull spring.
Almighty babe, whose tender armes
can force all foes to fly,
Correct my faults, protect my life,
direct me when I dy.

Amen sweet Jesus.

Of Christ His Childhood
Till i2 yeares age, how Xt his cheildhood spent,
Such actes to mortall eies he did present,

Poem by Robert Southwell.

1. Of Xt.

Sours sweetest mark, channel highest theme, man's most desired light.
To love him, life: to leave him, death: to live in him delight.
t, here by gift, thus by deit, thus each to others due.
First friend he was, best friend he is, almes will try him true.

2. Though young, yet wise, though small, yet strong; though many yet god he is.
As wise, he knows, as strong, he can, as god, he loves to lift.
His knowledge rules, his strength defends, his love doth cherish all.
His birth our joy, his life our light, his death our end of thrall.

3. Alas, her weeps, her sighs, her pants, yet doe his angels sing:
Out of his tears, his sighs & trobes, both bud a joyfull spring.
Almighty base, whose tender arms can force all foes to fly,
Correct my faults, protect my life, direct me when I dy.

Amin. Sweet Jesus!
All earthly penns unworthy were to write,
whose worthe, not men, but angells should recite
No natures blots, no childish faults defilde,
where grace was guide & god did play y° child.
In springing lockes, lay couched hoarie wit,
    In lowly lookes high maiestie did sitt:
In semblance young, a graue & ancient port,
    In tender tongue, sound sence of saged sort,
Nature impted all that shee could teach;
    & god supplied, where nature could not reach.
His mirth, of modest meane a mirrour was,
    His eye to try ech action was a glasse,
His sadnes, temprd with a mild aspect;
    whose lookes, did good approue, & bad correct.
His natures gifts, his grace, his word, & deed,
    well shewed that all did fro a god proceede.

Contributed by Terrance Keenan, special collections librarian at Syracuse University Library.

A Declaration of Loyalty to Country, 1775

A deep division in American society was apparent in 1775. Americans defined themselves in terms of loyalties; some considered themselves royalists and pledged allegiance to the crown, while other felt that the time had come for separation from England and promised their support to the Continental Congress.

Throughout the revolutionary period, royalists and their opponents struggled to convert each other. Royalists attempted to force their opponents to support the crown, while those who backed congress pressured royalists to renounce their allegiance to the king. One device used in conversion attempts was the declaration of loyalty: a signed statement of allegiance to crown or congress.

The declaration below was designed by Americans in Hampshire County (Massachusetts) who were committed to the cause of the Continental Congress. These people identified Colonel Israel Williams and his son Israel Williams Junior as royalists. On 3 February 1775 Israel Williams and his son were forced to sign a declara-
tion swearing that they would remain loyal to the Continental Congress.

This important document is part of the Spire Collection. In 1961 Mrs. Lyman J. Spire donated a collection of 419 printed sources pertaining to the American Revolution to the Syracuse University Library. Special emphasis was placed on Mrs. Spire's area of academic interest: the activities of the royalists during the revolutionary period.

In what follows, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization have been faithfully transcribed from the original.

At a meeting of the people, belonging to divers Towns in the County of Hampshire, on the Second day of February, 1775. Occasioned by Sundry Reports Spread about the Country, representing Col. Israel Williams of Hatfield, and his Son Mr. Israel Williams Jun. as greatly Enimical to their Country, and publickly opposing the measures generally adopted at the present day, to Obtain redress of the Common grievances of the Continent— The said Col. Williams, was brought before the body First at Hatfield; and afterwards by Order of said body was taken to Hadley, and there on the third day of said February was Examined touching Sundry charges brought against him as an Enemy to his Country, and the said Col. Williams not having Satisfield the people that the said Charges were not true, it was Ordered by the Body that the Said Col. Williams Should make and Subscribe the following Declarations in Order Effectually to prevent his pursuing the Like Conduct for the future,—or in any manner to Oppose the measures generally adopted by ye People and the said Israel does agree and Declare accordingly,

First, that he disapproves of the several acts of Parliament passed the Last Summer, with immediate respect to this province,—and that he will do nothing under those Acts, or in any manner to Execute the Same, Directly or indirectly.— Secondly that he Disapproves of the Bill commonly Called the Quebec Bill— Thirdly that he will not oppose the Measures and Regulations
A Declaration of Loyalty to Country, 1775.

At a meeting of the people belonging to divers towns in the County of Hampshire, on the Second day of February, 1775. Ouestion by Party Reports spread about the Country, representing Col. Israel Williams of Halftield, and his Son M. Israel Williams Jun. as great enemies to their Country, and publicly opposing the measures generally advised at the present day to obtain redress of the Common Woes of the Continent. The said Col. Williams was brought before the body First at Halftield, and afterwards by Order of said body was taken to Hadley, and there on the third day of said February was examined in regard to the proper charges brought against him as an Enemy to his Country, and the said Col. Williams not having satisfied the people that the said charges were not true, it was Ordered by the Body that the said Col. Williams should make and subscribe the following Declaration:

In Order Effectually to prevent him the said his pursuing the like conduct for the future, or in any manner to oppose the measures
of the "Continental Congress, but will Conform to the same so far as he may Consistent with his Duty to God.—

Forthly, that he will hold no Correspondence by Letter or message with General Gage or any other Person considered by the People as unfriendly to the Constitutional and Charter Rights of this People.

Fifthly that this Declaration be published in the Boston Evening Post; and finally that the said Israel shall be published an Enemy to his Country and treated accordingly in case he Violates the foregoing Declaration and Agreement.—

Is. Williams

The said Israel Williams Jun. agrees to, and freely subscribes the foregoing Declarations and articles according to their True Sense and meaning under the Convition mentioned in the Last article.

Dated at Hadley

Feb. 3d 1775

I. Williams Jun.

A True Copy

Contributed by Julien Vernet, a doctoral candidate in history at Syracuse University. For 1995–96 he received an assistantship, funded by the Charles A. Dana Foundation through the sponsorship of William Safire.

INTRODUCING THE LIBRARY OF MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE

By Robert A. Mandel

Both Syracuse University Press and Syracuse University Library Associates were founded under the aegis of Chancellor William P. Tolley, and the two organizations have always supported each other. Past directors of the Press, such as Donald Bean and Arpena Mesrobian, were deeply involved in Library Associates; the two organizations have shared board members—currently David Stam and David Tatham—and authors, such as John Robert Greene, whose article appears in this Courier.

Syracuse University Press has begun a new series, The Library of Mod-
ern Jewish Literature, dedicated to reprinting—either in first-time or new paperback editions—twentieth-century Jewish literature. Robert Mandel, director of the Press, inaugurated the series by holding a roundtable discussion on “The Jewish American Writer in America Today.” The event took place in the Bird Library on 25 October 1995, and the speakers were the first four writers to be published in the series: Johanna Kaplan, Cynthia Ozick, Norma Rosen, and Steve Stern.

Mandel’s opening remarks are printed below because they express a concern—shared by Library Associates—about the future of publishing. Toward the end of his talk he raised a number of questions, which were debated by the speakers and members of the audience after the speakers had each made a personal statement about what it means to be a Jewish American writer.

University presses have been publishing fiction for at least fifteen years. Syracuse University Press has been publishing fiction in its Irish studies, Middle East studies, and regional book lists. Now university presses are acquiring more contemporary fiction than ever before because of recent developments in commercial publishing.

The primary goal of commercial publishing has always been to make money. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the major corporations have taken over or acquired many fine small literary publishing houses. As a result, the influence of great editors who had developed stables of great authors has waned, and the artisan mentality of book publishing has been replaced by the corporate mentality. Now M.B.A.s and accountants make the bottom-line decisions about which books will be published, how long they will remain in print, whether they will be paperbacked, and whether they will be placed into inventory or remaindered.

Recent changes in the tax laws have encouraged this development: commercial publishing houses are taxed on the value of their growing inventory of books. Any book that cannot carry its share of the financial load is quickly remaindered and placed out of print. Today, many important books do not survive a single tax year.

If this situation had existed in the 1920s and 1930s many literary classics would have been remaindered—if they had been published at all—and generations of readers would have lost an important cultural legacy.
One of the roles of university presses is to publish books of importance and lasting value regardless of financial consequences. Books published by university presses often stay in print ten to twenty years and longer if there is some demand for a book, even for as few as twenty-five copies a year.

University presses have seized upon the crisis in book publishing as an opportunity. For us a best seller is a book that sells 1,500 copies over three years and 2,500 over a lifetime. Commercial houses are abandoning authors and books in unprecedented numbers because they estimate that they will not sell more than 3,000 or 10,000 in a single year.

In launching The Library of Modern Jewish Literature, Syracuse University Press is making a small contribution towards saving and retrieving important books from the dustbins of history. The Press plans to publish at least six reprinted novels by modern Jewish writers—either new paperback editions or first-time paperbacks—in every succeeding fall book season. The first six are *Cannibal Galaxy*, *Levitation*, *Bloodshed*, *Pagan Rabbi*, *Lazar Malkin Enters Heaven*, and *O’ My America*.

Now that the word has spread about this series, the Press is receiving hundreds of suggested titles for new paperback editions of out-of-print titles from scholars, writers, literary agents, and other book publishers. Already for the fall of 1996, the Press has acquired the first-time paperback rights from Schocken and Pantheon, respectively, for S. Y. Agnon’s last novel, *Shira*, and Tova Reich’s latest novel, *The Jewish War*. In addition, the Press plans to reprint two of Norma Rosen’s best works, *John and Anzia: An American Romance* and *At the Center*.

Today’s topic is “The Jewish American Writer in America Today. The phrase Jewish American writer is the subject of heated debates. When “Jewish American” becomes an adjective modifying “writer,” the result often takes on the look, the sound, and the feel of an oxymoron. Yet, whatever its inaccuracies and its contradictions, writers as diverse as Saul Bellow and Bernard Malamud, as I. B. Singer and Philip Roth, increasingly have found themselves sharing space in anthologies under the designation Jewish American literature.
Many of these identifiably Jewish American writers have objected vigorously to these phrases. In an interview, I. B. Singer put it this way: "I never call myself a Jewish writer, although I'm a Jew and much immersed in Jewishness. I would prefer to call myself a Yiddish writer because a writer is called after his language, not his religion. But you can also call me a Jewish writer. My father would have denied this because to him a Jewish writer was only a man who wrote about Jewish religion. But there is a lot of religion and religious content also in my writing and I'm at least as much a religion writer as the other writers (e.g., Philip Roth, Norman Mailer) who are Jewish and write either in Yiddish or English."

Singer, of course, was a diplomat among literary diplomats, a man who knew how to generate good press and to cultivate an adoring public. Why bite the busily typing fingers that review his books and write articles and scholarly books in his behalf? If they insist on calling him a Jewish writer, so be it.

Whenever Saul Bellow was interviewed, the first question of interviewers was "Would you describe yourself as a Jewish writer?" Here are some of his responses: "I think of myself as a Midwesterner and not as a Jew. I am often described as a Jewish writer; in much the same way one might be called a Samoan astronomer, or an Eskimo cellist, or a Zulu Gainsborough expert. There is some oddity about it. I am a Jew and have written some books. I have tried to fit my soul into the Jewish writer category, but it does not feel comfortably accommodated there. I wonder, now and then, whether Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud and I have not become the Hart, Schaeffner, and Marx of our trade. We have made it in the field of culture as Bernard Baruch made it on a park bench, as Polly Adler made it in prostitution, as Two-Gun Cohen, the personal bodyguard of Sun-Yat Sen, made it in China. My joke is not broad enough to cover the contempt that I feel for opportunists, wise guys and career types [meaning academics and critics] who impose such labels and trade upon them. People who make labels should be in the gumming business."

Jewish American writers and scholars face a unique dilemma in today's literary world. The growing trend towards the teaching of multicultural literature in English departments threatens the very
existence of this genre. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jewish writers—like Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth—helped bring Jewish literature from the margins of the literary world into the literary mainstream. Although not absorbed into the “canon”—which still remained the preserve of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant American writing establishment—the novels of Jewish writers, now recognized by Nobel prizes for literature, were found on reading lists of courses and in anthologies of modern American literature. With the spread of the multiculturalist approach to literature in recent years, Jewish writers find themselves in an increasingly awkward situation. Many of the most recent multicultural anthologies—which include selections from a multitude of Hispanic, Native American, African-American, and Asian-American writers—do not include Jewish American writers; many “multiculturalists” consider Jewish American writers as part of the “establishment.” Yet, the literary establishment never truly absorbed modern Jewish American writers into the canon and now conveniently places these writers within the multicultural galaxy. Courses and anthologies on modern American literature similarly exclude the majority of Jewish American writers. Thus Jewish writers are being excluded by both multiculturalists and practitioners of the traditional canon. Jewish writers find themselves again on the outside.

This, then, is the context of our discussion on the Jewish American writer. Is this a valid literary category? Was it ever? Can one still refer to the Jewish American writer in the era of the new multiculturalism? If so, do American Jewish writers share a way of experiencing and reflecting their world? Are there commonalities in Jewish American fiction? Are there themes, assumptions, attitudes, aesthetic and moral theories that are strictly identifiable as Jewish American? What is the future of Jewish American writing? These are some of the questions that I hope our esteemed speakers will respond to.
PROGRAM FOR 1995–96

September 7, 1995
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library
Tobias Wolff
Department of English
Syracuse University
THE ART OF MEMORY

October 5, 1995
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library
Tucker Madawick
Industrial Design Society
of America
DESIGNING HISTORY: PROCESS, PROSPECTS, PORTENTS

October 12, 1995
Thursday, 4 p.m.
Alumnae Lounge
Women’s Building
Melinda Wagner
Department of Music, Hunter College
Andrew Waggoner
School of Music, Syracuse University
COMPOSING OURSELVES: MINDY WAGNER AND ANDY WAGGONER SHARE THOUGHTS ON MUSICAL CREATIVITY

November 7, 1995
Tuesday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library
Robert Thompson
Department of Television, Radio, and Film
Syracuse University
MASTERPIECE TELEVISION: CREATING ST. ELSEWHERE

November 9–11, 1995
1916 Room, Bird Library
Book Sale
Cosponsored by Library Associates and the Syracuse University Library

December 14, 1995
Sixth floor
Bird Library
Annual Holiday Reception

February 15, 1996
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library
Rodger Mack
Claire Harootunian
Department of Studio Arts, Syracuse University
INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE WORKSHOPS: A SLIDE SHOW
March 7, 1996  
Thursday, 4 p.m.  
1916 Room, Bird Library  
Gerard Moses  
Marie Kemp  
Department of Drama, Syracuse University  
THEATER: THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

April 11, 1996  
Thursday, 4 p.m.  
1916 Room, Bird Library  
Claire Harootunian, Gail Hoffman, and Mary Stewart  
School of Art and Design, Syracuse University  
THE BOOK AS ART

May 3, 1996  
Friday, 12 noon  
Goldstein Student Center, South Campus  
Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting  
Frederick Phelps  
Donna Thomas  
The Soling Program, Syracuse University  
FOSTERING CREATIVITY: THE SOLING PROGRAM

June 1, 1996  
Saturday, 3 p.m.  
Menschel Gallery, Schine Student Center  
Book signing by John Robert Greene  
Syracuse University: The Tolley Years, 1942–1969  
Published by Syracuse University Press
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES, founded in 1953, is a society whose efforts are devoted to the enrichment of the Syracuse University Library and especially the rare book and manuscript collections. Library Associates makes it possible to strengthen these collections through the acquisition of unusual books, manuscripts, and other research materials that are rare and often of such value that the Library would not otherwise be able to acquire them.

Those with an interest in history, literature, book collecting, and the graphic arts are welcome to join Library Associates. Perquisites of membership include general use of the Syracuse University Library’s facilities, as well as invitations to exhibitions, Associates-sponsored lectures, and special events of the University Library. Members at the Patron level may borrow books. In addition, all members will receive our newsletter, The Library Connection, incidental publications, typographic keepsakes, and the Syracuse University Library Associates Courier, an annual publication that contains articles related to unusual and interesting aspects of the Library’s holdings and, in particular, to rare books, manuscripts, and archival collections in the Department of Special Collections.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS are as follows: Benefactor, $500; Sustaining member, $200; Patron, $100; Individual member, $50; Faculty and staff of Syracuse University, $35; Senior citizen, $25; Students, $15. Checks, made payable to Syracuse University Library Associates, should be sent to the Secretary, 600 Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y. 13244-2010. For further information about the programs and activities of the Library Associates, telephone (315) 443-2697.

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