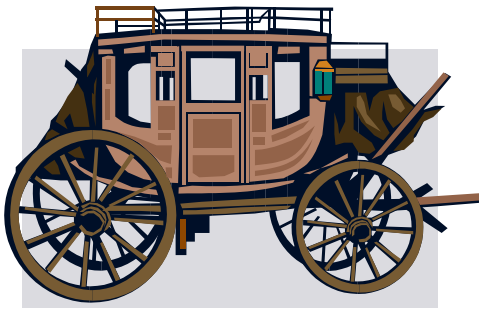


RECOLLECTIONS



JACK D. RITTENHOUSE

Boy Scout
Magician
Hobo
Oil Industry Publicist
Publisher (Stage Coach Press)
UNM Press Editor
Rare Book Dealer
Historian of New Mexico

By
**JACK DEVERE
RIPPENHOUSE**
(1912 –1991)
Albuquerque, New Mexico

From his unpublished hand-typed chapters
Original Copyright ©1981-1989

Composited, Illustrated, and Edited By Harry Briley

Revised 7/25/2021

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Editor's Note

Jack hand-wrote on the cover page of this memoir chapter (one of his first completed):

“Not for publication. Rough draft for family reading – 10/26/1981”

Yet, he specifically asked that some original material be moved into other chapters, namely details about the Ellis Plan moved into the ***Advertising Years*** chapter and specifics tied to his artisan press moved into the ***Stagecoach Press*** chapter. I removed redundant material that he already covered in other chapters to those respective chapters.

With judicious editing and rearrangement, the rest of this chapter remained a crucial, even affectionate, part of his overall story where it matched the tenor and content of his other chapters. More properly understood, this chapter reflected the heart of Jack's lifelong passion with books. He wrote of his struggles (many), complaints (rare), and pointedly evaluated his experiences within the book trade.

I could not remove this chapter without a severe loss towards understanding his frequent usage of the term “Bookman”. Therefore, I brought forward text from other chapters that tied to the theme of how he became enamored with books into this modified chapter.

I made some textual changes following his own examples of separating a complaint from the person with whom he still respected. Otherwise, the people of his various publishing and intellectual circles remain described and named, as Jack wrote originally in 1981.

Some of the original material explained closely held trade secrets. I slightly generalized that information. An antiquarian bookman would already be knowledgeable and the rest of us would lose the story line within too many marketing details.

I trust that he would accept the resulting movements to (and from) other chapters and how this chapter became redacted from his original 1981 draft sufficiently to permit a readership beyond the immediate (and severely dwindling number of) family members.

Harry Briley, 2014

Acknowledgement

In 2020, I received an 84-page transcript from David Farmer of a rambling interview in 1989 when he visited Jack's collection of rare southwest Americana.

Jack had over \$200,000 of such books on 15 shelves in his basement. After Jack died in 1991, this rare interview captured his important book-trade secrets. Many excerpts filled memoir gaps in this chapter and motivated me to edit chapters about his decade at UNM Press and later as an antiquarian bookseller. I note interview extracts as:

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

Harry Briley, 2020

CHAPTER 9: BOOKS and I

GROWING UP

Books as a Child

I first became interested in books after my third birthday, when for Christmas 1915; I received a copy of *Little Black Sambo*. I remember the book from its vivid color. I could not read but aware that the pages carried a story when my elders looked at the pages. The fact that I recalled the title and physical appearance is an early indicator.

At age four, we moved to the desert part of Arizona east of Phoenix and later into Phoenix itself. I did not start to school until age seven, at the old Garfield School in Phoenix. We learned reading from flashcards containing syllables. I was quicker at learning them than at any other subject.

[After returning to Constantine, Michigan,] I received my first book on my ninth birthday in November 1921. This gift edition of a book of poems, *Water Babies* by Kingsley, was given to me by Blanche, a waitress at [my grandparent's] hotel. I did not care for the text, but I enjoyed the feel of the slim book, with its cherubs frolicking in the English streams. I recall the shape of the book with pages a bit narrower than standard.

However, that year was marked most of all by my discovery of the town's public library. It was open only two evenings a week from 6:30pm to 9pm, and at no other time. The library filled a former store a block from the hotel. I could borrow two books at a time. I was in the fourth grade. I went from the first into the fourth grades in two and a half years. My taste was in the Gelett Burgess children's books. I arrived at the library when it opened and read as fast as I could until it closed. I then took two other books back to our rooms at the hotel, to read and return when the library opened again. There were few, if any, books at the hotel.

I borrowed one book about the Boy Scouts that [motivated] me to become a Scout when I became twelve. There were no Cub Scouts in those days, for Scouting began in the United States the year I was born, 1912.

At age ten, I was back in Fort Wayne with my parents. At eleven, we were in a small house where the family stayed for the next ten years. Our cheap Victorian 'secretary' [desk] had a lid that dropped to provide a writing surface and two shelves below of thirty inches wide for the [entire] family library.

While our home collection was tiny, we often went by streetcar to the public library. Meaning, there were always books at home. Mother bought a set of the *Book of Knowledge* and made long payments on it, so we could learn about the world around us.

As a Boy Scout, I received *Boys' Life* magazine and subscribed to another magazine called *Pathfinder*. The school gave us free copies of *Youth's Companion*.

While in Arizona, my parents became great readers of Zane Grey novels, especially *Riders of the Purple Sage* and *Under the Tonto Rim*. Dad read at least one pulp Western magazine a week.

Not everything was western. My mother in her thirties had books by Elinor Glyn, Harold Bell Wright, and such romances as *The Prisoner of Zenda*. Although not exactly great literature, they let me know that reading was fun.

For my eleventh birthday, my aunt gave me three books by James Fennimore Cooper: *The Deerslayer*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, and *The Pathfinder*. No one told her that these were normally for a boy three years older. I read them all more than once.

[In Junior High,] I had twenty-five cents allowance a day for lunch. I could leave school during lunchtime, went a few blocks by trolley, got a hot beef sandwich for fifteen cents at Woolworths, and while there bought a cheap book for the remaining dime. My personal library grew with books such as *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Treasure Island*, or *The Three Musketeers*.

Once, Woolworth piled the lunch counter high with odd volumes of a set of Robert Louis Stevenson books. They were poorly printed and cheaply bound for ten cents each. Whenever I had lunch money, part was shared with Stevenson. I eventually acquired all twenty-eight volumes of his complete works. In woodworking [class], I made a hanging shelf exactly right to hold the set. For a college course in Victorian literature, I easily specialized in Stevenson's works. Although I collected boys' books, this was the first time that I became a serious book collector. I was thirteen years old.

In my second or third year at high school, I became a library page in the school's one room library. My duties were to put books back on the shelves and to "read" the shelves to make sure that books were put back in proper order by students. Books on economics were under the east windows and books on biography were in the far corner.

During my senior year, I worked for the main public library, going around town to pick up books kept overlong by patrons. I thus worked after school for several months.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

I hung around the high school library more than most kids did and did not realize it. It was the natural thing to do. I worked there part-time as a page putting books back on the shelf. I got to know the Dewey decimal system. I then became a runner for the local public library rounding up overdue books. They did not care if I collected the fine or not, just bring the books back.

By now, the world of books and libraries were as natural as breathing, and I took no special notice of them except when an especially good book crossed my trail. One Everett Harre's novel, *Behold the Woman*, made marvelous use of words. New words such as tintinnabulation came to me, including all the overdrawn adjectives that described colors and sounds and textures.

Books in College

At college and the next few years, I did not have the richness one might expect in books. There was a good library and friends suggested books such as *Jurgen*, but I had to work my way during The Great Depression when I often went hungry. There was no joy in reading when hungry.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

I went to Indiana State Teachers College to be a high school teacher of history, until I found I did not want to be doing the same thing over and over. I know high school history teachers that love it. It was not for me. I did not do much in books at that time except read, read, read, and accumulate.

I collected a small library, a shelf or two, and lost it all when locked out of my room once for not paying the two dollars a week rent. Before I could get the back rent together, my possessions, [and books] were forfeited.

I read the entire *Forsyth Saga* during noon hours, lunching on a small loaf of bread and a small chunk of cheese. At nights, I read *War and Peace*. Neither were assigned reading. Assignments were for *Beowulf*, etc.

In my last year, I worked on a small newspaper, the *Terre Haute News*, in the college town, a half-political half-shopping newspaper done by a local job printer. There I got my first touch of printing, doing some bookplates, etc., on a platen press.

I dropped out of college after three years and went back to Fort Wayne, where I sought a job on the *Journal-Gazette*, a morning paper. Without employment, I went over to the library and read *How to Get a Job*. The book advised these steps:

- Decide where you want to work
- Find something there not being done which you can do
- Go in and offer to do it
- Do not just ask for 'a job'

The paper had no book review column. I went in and offered to write one. The editor [Frank Roberts] told me that they did not need a separate book column, as the United Press furnished them a syndicated column they could run whenever they wanted a book section. I replied that a locally written column would be more interesting and I would do it free. All I asked was use of a newsroom typewriter during off-hours, stationery, and that they would mail my outgoing letters. They accepted my offer.

For the next six or eight months I ran this column, writing to publishers for review copies, giving some sort of review to every book I received and living on the money received by selling my review copies at half price to the local library.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

I went home in the depths of the Depression trying to figure out what to do. I thought, "Well, I'll get a job on a newspaper," because I had worked a little in a print shop there as an editor of a little temporary neighborhood newspaper.

I went to the editor [of the regular] morning paper, which meant the crew came on at 1:00 in the afternoon, saying; "I can come in the morning at eight or nine and use one of the desks."

*They took care of my outgoing mail, put postage on my requests for review copies. I wrote a kind of a review column. Book reviewing to me was to tell what is in the book, what the book is about. Book criticism is where you tear the thing apart and express your own position. Mine were just reviews, just kind of catalog summaries praising books I liked. The only one I tore apart, purely to create reader interest by having controversy, was **Gone with the Wind**.*

This took me into local bookstores. My old high school librarian retired and ran a small bookshop. I had not spent much time earlier in bookshops, having no money. It was only during my junior year in high school that I ever went into a bookshop. I bought a copy of a book of tall tales about *Snowshoe Al* as publicized in a column in the *Chicago Tribune*. It was my first purchase in a bookshop, at the older Alter store in Fort Wayne.

NEW YORK CITY

In the *Wander Year* chapter after I left the newspaper early in 1934, I described my experiences working in a back-number magazine store in New York City, and my visits to publishing houses. At the end of that year, I was back in Fort Wayne and during a youthful impulse became first married.

My next [youthful] idea was to become an editor with a book publisher in New York and discover the great American novel. Leaving my new wife behind for she was working, I rode freight trains arriving there in late June 1935. Since my fortunes were never high, a Great Depression low income felt as the normal way of life. I had no sorrows.

I got a part-time job as barker in front of the Gaiety Burlesque house on Times Square near 46th Street, had my wife join me, and worked through until the publishing business began the seasonal rise in activity. During October, when publishers most likely hired, I wrote letters of application in longhand and sent out one or two each day.

Alfred Knopf Mail Room

The first reply came from Alfred Knopf in the Hecksher Building on Fifth Avenue at 57th Street. A sales assistant interviewed me for a young man in their mailroom. They preferred someone married, with some college education, and could work for fifteen dollars a week [or \$780 a year]. The proposal worked the beginner for a couple of months in several departments in turn, to see where the man would best fit.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

I got a job with Alfred Knopf, who was one of the great ones, as his mail boy. That is the lowest [job] on the rung. I went to work for him in November 1935, and they gave me a nice recruiting talk. The fellow who was pretty well down the ladder [himself] said,

"What we want to do is get a young man like you. You're married?" "Yes."

"College trained?" "Yes."

"Salary is fifteen dollars a week, five days a week, half days on Saturdays. You have to be here every morning at 7:30 as the first one in. The Post Office has our bag of mail hanging on the back doorknob. You decide where it should go so when the people come in at 8 o'clock, they will be ready to work."

"We'll work you there for six months and then we'll see what other department you might move up into and we'll move you to that department. That way you can rise in the business."

My work engaged me from the start. Each morning I arrived a half-hour before the rest of the staff. Hanging from the doorknob on the rear office door was a [Post Office] mail sack, usually half-full. I opened the bag, sorted out any letters marked “personal,” and ran the rest through an envelope opener. I sorted the letters into wire baskets for Mr. Knopf, Mrs. Knopf, Orders, Payments, Editorial, and so on. The tray for orders got top priority and went to the billing department. Mr. Knopf’s letters went to his secretary.

The mail was the best possible education. I saw proposals from W. Dwiggins on design, from Georg Salter on jackets, from Vail-Ballou on the price of binding, from the Book of the Month Club on proposals, and from authors everywhere. There were letters from Thomas Mann, H. L. Mencken, Willa Cather, Carl Van Vechten, Warwick Deeping, and all the greats of the season of 1935-36.

Sometimes I saw these [same] authors in the office, Willa Cather, looking like a Helen Hokinson matron out of the *New Yorker*; and Langston Hughes, slim and athletic. Once I rode down in the elevator with H. L. Mencken, who said he knew a Rittenhouse because he once had a housekeeper by that name. He talked about the value of book advertising and book reviews during the ride down; Mencken said that they did a little good but the real impetus came from people talking up a book.

At Christmas time, I rode with Mr. Knopf’s chauffeur to deliver Christmas gifts to the apartments of authors or important friends living in Manhattan, such as Clarence Day, and Reuben Mamoulian. I met only their maids at the service entrances.

The man in charge of the mailroom was a wiry young fellow known only as Harold and there were usually two other young men my age working in the room. It was not a bad post at fifteen dollars a week for a young man just past twenty-three. The Knopf staff included twenty people. I gathered the afternoons’ outgoing mail and processed it.

My other duties included sending books and materials to salesmen in the field, stuffing and mailing catalogs and other advertising, and maintaining the firm’s mailing list on 23,000 addressograph plates. In each Knopf book, a reply card added customers to the list. I had plates or address changes made, and the plates inserted in the [feeder] trays.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

All of this mail came in. I read it all. I thought, "Oh boy, this is it." At first, I wanted to be an editor. Then I saw that there are two kinds of editor. One kind is the acquisitions editor. He reads the original manuscript and chooses it. The other is the copy editor who changes the commas and periods and spelling. I did not know there were these two kinds. The editors were drudges, like bookkeepers with green eyeshades, reading, and penciling all day.

Being an editor was not for me. Alfred and/or Blanche Knopf made the real editorial decisions. The copy editors sat studiously at desks all day long, moving seldom.

A steady flow of books came from European publishers. When his shelves overflowed, Mr. Knopf assigned me to carry a box of books to Phillip Duschnes, the rare book dealer, to sell for whatever they would bring. This was my first taste of the antiquarian trade.

The real action was in advertising and promotion as done by [Bernard Smith]. Action was in the air around him all the time. He always moved swiftly, waving proofs or printed pieces. I started my own notebook on publishers, advertising, listing, organizing, and charting all of the functions.

I tried my hand at making up ads and displays, but I never showed them because they seemed too immature. When we did a book with the word ‘mirror’ in its title, I worked out a hanging display with an oval piece of cardboard on which was mounted an oval piece of foil to resemble a mirror; on the back was the title of the book. The idea was to hang it by a string from the ceiling near the cash register.

Alfred’s son, Alfred Jr., possibly in his first year of college, sometimes came into the mailroom. We got along well although never became special friends. He sometimes asked when the two of us might start up our own publishing firm. He later became one of the founders of Athenaeum, but by then had undoubtedly forgotten me.

I expected promotion or movement among different departments to find where I performed best. As the months passed without movement [as promised], I saw no future advancement. The office manager told me that my future lay only in the mailroom. People [already] trained for a particular job filled openings up the line.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

After almost nine months, I went to the manager of the whole place.

I said, "Look, I've been here now, and I kind of know my way around, and they said they'd move me up."

He said, "Oh no, we don't move anybody up in this business. Not at Knopf's. We never promote from within. If we have an opening we hire from the outside the best-qualified person for that job. We have plenty of applicants. You are a mail boy. You are going to be mail boy forever. That is your spot."

I went to Alfred, to whom I spoke only rarely, and Blanche, his wife. She once said, "Tell that red-headed mail boy to stop smoking that Meerschaum pipe." My father had given that pipe to me.

I said, "I'm not going to be promoted."

He said, "I leave the management end of the business up to [the manager]. If that's what he told you, that's what it is."

Since Mr. Knopf confirmed this, I decided to leave. Looking back, they could not have moved me since no other department used trainees. By June, after eight months at Knopf's, I had a week's vacation due. I took it and wrote that I would not return.

Starting Over

That summer of 1936, we lived in a lake cottage in Indiana and I went back to my old routine of reviewing books and living off the sale of review copies. During all my time at Knopf's, I wrote the weekly book review column for the Fort Wayne newspaper, and continued until 1937 or 1938. I stayed at the lake until after Labor Day and then caught the freight trains back to New York.

Druggists Addressing Service

I repeated the same old routine of getting any sort of work until the publishing business began its [October] upswing. I worked during the day at a letter shop firm known as Druggists Addressing Service, down near Canal Street in New York, running an Addressograph machine all day.

This firm had a mailing list of every druggist in the US and addressed mailings for the big manufacturers. We once sent out a mailing of one million circulars on the mouthwash called Zonite.

I ran an Addressograph machine with a foot control. The machines were equipped with high-speed drive pulleys, and I sat all day feeding the machine by hand. I pulled an envelope into position under the center, a plate slid into position, and I pressed the foot lever to allow the motor-driven "hammer" to come down. Then I pulled the addressed envelope away with my left hand. One man kept me supplied with envelopes and took away those I addressed. Another man brought new address plates to replenish the machine. I found that at top speed, I addressed 2300 [3500?] envelopes an hour by this hand-feeding method. This speed became possible because the company put a larger pulley than usual on the machine, so it responded faster.

One unlucky operator fed in the envelope with his right hand but failed to pull his hand away in the instant before pressing the foot control. He had two badly smashed fingers. The company simply paid him his wages up to that hour, gave him a slip to the company doctor, and fired him. A worker had no recourse. He caused his own accident, they said. Those were the days of unorganized labor.

For three or four months I busily worked at the addressing shop from 8am to 5pm, then walked up to the theater to work from 6 pm to eleven or midnight as an usher at the old City Theater on Fourteenth Street just off Union square near Luchow's restaurant.

I ate my supper (I carried two bag lunches) as I walked. The theater is gone, but the old Academy Theater a few doors away continued. I worked that shift until midnight, seven nights a week, and typed up the daily reports for the night manager.

Hunting for Publishing Job

October was the right time to look for a job in publishing. I did not write letters of application in longhand, one by one, as I did when I got work at Knopf's [in 1935]. I ran off a hundred copies by lithograph at Goldsmiths stationery store on Nassau Street and sent them out a few at a time to 93 publishers in New York City.

“It Runs in the Family”

PAPERMEN, printers, publishers, poets! Since William Rittenhouse established the first paper mill in America back in 1690, the family name has been connected with book production in one way or another.

I am only a leaf from the old tree, but books are my career too.

YOU ARE RIGHT; this is a letter of application, but for a JOB, not just a position. Be fair to yourself and to me. Read it through.

I have had experience in the publishing field to an extent that makes me of value in a small house as an all-around assistant. In a larger house, I am most familiar with the work of the publicity department and with mailing campaigns.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Age: 24. Education: Indiana State Teachers College. (Economics and Literature).

Married. Experienced newspaperman; Book editor, Fort Wayne, Indiana, JOURNAL-GAZETTE, since 1933. Feature writer on same paper.

PUBLISHING EXPERIENCE: connected with firm of ALFRED A. KNOPF, 730 Fifth Ave, New York, 1935 1936. Reference here: Mr. Bernard Smith, publicity head. His office phone is Circle 7-7670. .

ALSO have been roving reporter, office boy, bookshop manager, book lecturer, mail clerk, librarian, printers devil. .

As a general assistant, I can lend a hand in many departments. I can lay out and letter posters, write ad copy, am familiar with much of the work of the production department. I am an expert addressograph operator and mail clerk, can handle general correspondence, read and check manuscripts and proof and handle routine office tasks. (Minimum salary: \$25. Hours unlimited)

MAY I HAVE AN INTERVIEW?

Sincerely yours,

s/ [*Jack D Rittenhouse*]

153 West 22nd Street, N.Y.C.

*MAY I HEAR FROM
YOU SOON?*

Rittenhouse Settlers

[Jack referred to William Rittenhouse, as do many families along that paternal line. It is common in Pennsylvania to find someone connected to that settler. Jack purchased a rare walking guidebook in pristine shape to historic Germantown, a suburb of Philadelphia.

As a publishing curiosity, each section title has tiny swastika corner decorations. Due to 1871 archeology, the BBC reported that the symbol became popular with Coca-Cola, Boy Scouts, Girls Club, and American military uniforms. In 1920, Adolf Hitler adopted it as a German national symbol. Thus this 1926 guidebook begs for research into whether the 1902 edition had it already or this fourth edition added it as a nod to German pride.]

Guidebook to Historic Germantown (Charles Jenkins ©1902, Site and Relic Society, Germantown, Fourth Edition 1926):

*p.7 “1690 – First paper mill in America erected in Germantown.
1708 – First Mennonite meetinghouse in America built in Germantown.
1732 – David Rittenhouse born
1772 – First [printers] type cast in America made in Germantown”*

p.14: “Cheltenham Avenue Station [of Reading Railroad] is ... nearest the Rittenhouse House and site of the first [American] paper mill.”

p.49 “As Printing Types are now made to a considerable degree of perfection by an ingenious Artist in Germantown; it is recommended to the Printers to use such Types in preference to any which may be hereafter imported [from Europe] – Pennsylvania Gazette, 2/1/1775”

p.141: (edited) “At the bottom of a steep hill near Rittenhouse Street is a little house [1707], the birthplace of David Rittenhouse [1732]: Pennsylvania’s first and greatest astronomer, President of the Philosophical Society in 1791 until his death [1796 at age 64]; Treasurer of the State from 1777 to 1789; and, Director of the [Philadelphia] Mint from 1792 to 1795.

William Rittenhouse, the first of that name in America, arrived in 1690, and was the first paper maker in the Colonies. The mill was located near his house. It was washed away by a freshet in 1701 and another built; this in time was succeeded by yet another, and it by a fourth in 1780. The little stream was Monoshone Creek, but the popular name is Paper Mill Run.

William Rittenhouse was a Mennonite preacher. His oldest son was Mathias, whose youngest son was Nicholas, and David was the latter’s oldest son [as the first four generations]. Up to within a few years there was a cluster of houses around the roads at this point and the settlement was called Rittenhouse Town,”

Hillman-Curl

I had two [early] replies. Prentice-Hall wanted to interview me for writing sales letters on books. The other was a possible job opening as advertising manager at the small publishing firm of Hillman-Curl at 66 Fifth Avenue. I chose the Hillman-Curl job.

Hillman-Curl on Fifth Street was just north of Prentice-Hall in their tall, narrow building. Below us was the Macmillan Building, looking like a temple or a bank. Between MacMillan and Hillman-Curl, (we had only part of a floor) lay the antiquarian bookshop of Dauber and Pine. Across the street was a mail-order remainder house for libraries.

Alex Hillman and Sam Curl interviewed me. They asked me if I knew what to do as a publisher's advertising manager. I showed them the charts I had drawn up by watching Bernard Smiths' work. They were impressed enough to give me the job at \$22 a week [even though I stated a minimum of \$25 a week (\$1300 a year) in my circular].

However, I [immediately] came down with a terrible bout of intestinal flu, brought on by working two jobs and living on hasty meals. I thought I would lose the [new] job, but both men were considerate, and I started work early on 1/4/1937.

Hillman-Curl was a better [but] average example of a small publishing firm than Knopf. "Lord Alfred", a term of respect, was a house with focus, style, and predictable character. We were younger with a dozen people not yet unified in policy and style.

Alex Hillman was an [ex-auto dealer] executive with literary leanings. He later took over *Pageant* magazine and became interested in the high-level auction business. The literary brain was Sam Curl, a man of wide reading, who played chess, and kept a Siamese cat in his Greenwich Village apartment. The staff mostly regarded Sam with affection and respect. Whatever their attitude was toward Hillman, there was [noticeable] fear present.

It did not take me long to realize that I knew nothing about advertising. There was a great gulf between charting a job and doing it. I made several blunders, but managed to hold on, partly because the firm had never had a fulltime advertising manager and did not see my weaknesses. On the other hand, maybe they went along to give me a chance.

Four Imprint Lines

In the latter part of the 1930s, any young publishing house scrambled to stay alive. Hillman-Curl had no distinguished backlist. Indeed, it had hardly any backlist at all. Therefore, we worked with four lines or imprints, each distinct from the others: Hillman-Curl, Arcadia House, Godwin Books, and Rarity Press.

- Hillman-Curl was the core operation hoping to become another Knopf, Dutton, or Doubleday. We published the best books under that imprint. As a new smaller firm, we got manuscripts only from unknown authors ready to start or from older

authors who already wrote their one fine book a dozen years before. Not until after I left did they get a best-seller, in Jan Valtin's *Out of the Night*

- Arcadia House was a line aimed at rental libraries. During the Depression, there were many rental libraries charging three cents a day. Anyone could find reading matter at less than twenty-five cents even if one took a week to read a novel. The Arcadia House line was thick with romances in the style of Grace Livingston Hill, an author we did not have, but the line often imitated her [style]. The books could pass the strictest censoring. They were vapid and inconsequential. We printed a new crop each month for rental libraries who wanted "the latest."
- The Godwin line was a little different. They were not exactly spicy but came as close to it as permissible. Today, they would be innocuous. Their most daring venture was the use of asterisks. If this line had a model, it probably was Vina Delmar's *Bad Girl*, a sensational book of a decade earlier. The chief lure was its jacket and title. The jacket artist got a hundred dollars for a full color painting that featured a busty girl or one dressed in clinging satin, or both. They used the word "ecstasy" often in their titles. *Ecstasy Girl*, *Ecstasy Night*, or *Moment of Ecstasy* could have been three acceptable titles.
- The Rarity Press line aimed at masculine tastes. These were the "forbidden" classics by Pierre de Louys, Rabelais [mentioned in the Broadway play and film, *Music Man*, as immoral as Balzac was], Boccaccio, De Maupassant, and others. One of the heads of the firm secured a copy of a British edition produced with handsome typography. We cut the book apart to make a set of engravings and electrotypes. Offset-lithography had not yet become a practical method of reproduction. The books all looked alike in passionate wine-red cloth bindings stamped with imitation gold. We advertised them in full-page ads in men's magazines, pointing out that readers could get these beautiful, forbidden books for only ten dollars instead of forty dollars on the Continent. Each book had a short life and then we sold the plates to another publisher who ran them through their own promotion, perhaps using direct mail, and continued to still another house. After forty years, I still saw one of these books occasionally in old shops.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

*They were bound in passionate purple cloth and had a line drawing of a nude holding nothing but a long scarf in one hand and looking up at the stars. The guy was a pirate. He would go to England and buy one copy of a book. The spicy books of those days were Rabelais and **The Girl with the Golden Eyes**.*

These were all by dead authors, out-of-print stuff. He never got sued by an author. He just put it under the guillotine cutter to make printing plates. He printed these as, "This book would cost you \$75 in England and we'll sell it to you for \$9.95 postpaid. Very rare, very spicy. Plain brown wrapper." He got lots of letters, a few lawsuits, or threats of lawsuits.

Author Compensation

The top line Hillman-Curl books handled authors on royalty, with each book designed and priced according to its individual merits. The Rarity Press did only reprinting, with little or no design, of public domain books with no payment to an author.

The Arcadia House and Godwin lines were a different matter. Hack authors on contract wrote most of these books, receiving three hundred dollars a month with many capable of doing a book a month. Some were by authors who needed money more than fame, so they wrote books under pseudonyms. Indeed all of the contract authors used pen names, for readers doubted that anyone produced over three books a year. These people wrote ten or more per year.

Books as Manufacturing

Alex Hillman was a calculating executive in analyzing the market. It appeared at times that he published books [purposefully] remaindered. He could make a profit on a book remaindered at twenty-five cents. The first step reduced author expense by having [hack] authors on contract. The next requirement was standard length, so the books ran 224 gages, including front matter, and thus print in seven signatures with sixteen pages on a side. After the type was set, a staff editor could trim the long books or, at times, write a little to extend short books. He contracted for [paper and bindery] cloth by the carload, all the same grade but varying [only] in color. Typographic design was undistinguished.

Once the new book appeared, there was a predictable sale to rental libraries and book wholesalers. After a market life of a few months, the book was offered to a remainder wholesaler at a price that allowed a small profit per copy. Pennies counted, and each month there was a small harvest when a new lot moved into the remainder market.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

In those days, every Walgreen's store had a whirling around display of cut-price books, remainders. Union News Company, the big remainder distributor handled these at the time. [We] produced these books very economically. The author got no royalty, just a straight contract to crank the stuff out. Everything was cheap except the painting on the jacket.

Every so often [Hillman] would walk in with a hangdog look, "Got another bunch of lemons here. Can't sell them. Will you give me 25 cents apiece?" "Sure."

They were manufactured for 20 cents by design, so it was all cost by the end. He made a nickel, over 25% on each book! He fooled them. This was profitable.

Never was the quantity larger than what the remainder people wanted. It was a shrewd successful business, a manufacturing rather than a publishing operation, except for the [top of the line] Hillman-Curl books.

Office Life

I sent out review copies, prepared and mailed lists and catalogs, and occasional ads in *Publishers Weekly*. I shared an office with Nat Teitel, an editor of the Hillman-Curl line. I studied advertising, using a copy of *Modern Advertising* by Kenneth Goode as my text. I learned slowly about copywriting, typography, and printing.

A union formed known as the Book and Magazine Guild (BMG), which later affiliated with the United Office and Professional Workers, as part of the CIO. I joined principally because the BMG held classes where key figures in various aspects of publishing spoke. White-collar workers were hesitant about unions, considering themselves “professionals” rather than laborers, but were still uneasy about low wages and abrupt dismissals. Thus, they could become involved in a professional educational group rather than a “union.”

In many ways, it was a pleasant period in life.

I still wrote the weekly book column for the Fort Wayne newspaper, and I took my review copies down [to sell] to the famous Booksellers Row on Fourth Avenue, that ran from Fourteenth Street down to Eighth Street. Schulte’s was my favorite place where I sold my review copies at one-fourth list price in cash or one-half in trade. I built up a large collection of Modern Library editions acquired through such trading. A single review copy might yield two or even three Modern Library volumes.

Sometimes an author with more money than sense, or who wrote because of his ego more than his need for income, got the idea that if he buttered up the advertising manager, his book might get favored treatment. Occasionally, he invited me to a fine restaurant for lunch that otherwise I could never afford.

Once asked if I wanted a drink before lunch, this Hoosier-bred young man was caught unawares with the role of the martini, surprised the table by ordering an absinthe frappe. While an imitation absinthe, the genuine being illegal, I did not particularly enjoy it.

The climax came to me at Hillman-Curl when I [proposed] a layout and copy for an ad in *Publishers Weekly*, in a style that I thought ingenious and clever. I found it again years later and viewed it [myself] with scorn. Hillman [likewise] rejected it and called in a professional advertising agency. All invoices came to me for approval and checking, and I gasped when I saw the agency’s bill of \$120 for that one ad. Since I made \$22 a week, it became apparent that I was on the wrong side of the desk or in the wrong business.

I knew nothing about advertising agency operation, so I explored its possibilities, unaware that this changed my life for the next twenty years. I nonetheless absorbed by osmosis much of the tradition of publishing.

We had no regular coffee breaks but got away occasionally for a cup. I met Ed Delafield who handled sales. I heard office gossip about the Macmillan people, who had just acquired a Civil War, pro-Southern novel that they felt might be a superb seller of twenty-thousand copies at tops, entitled *Gone with the Wind*.

I had a friend and patron in Arthur Fletcher Hall, who founded the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, back in Fort Wayne. During my college years, he sometimes sent me money or arranged for me to do some work. I wrote to him about the problem of advertising. He wrote back saying that I would be foolish to start my own agency, and that I should get into an agency any [other] way and learn the business that way.

I saw Hillman-Curl growing by mid-1937, and the national economy slowly climbed up from the depths. However, I did not do well [with my advertising manager tasks and after six months I quit when vacation time came around.]

In hindsight, I should have tried to get in at the Dauber and Pine [antiquarian bookshop]. Instead, I went back to Indiana living with my parents and worked for the Louis Wade Advertising Agency that summer. I thus quit [book] publishing for many years.

Interlude with Advertising

The *Advertising Years* chapter describes my many years in agency work, but two facts were relevant towards my continuing interest in books and publishing.

The first was that I spent most of my agency work in print advertising rather than in radio, television, outdoor, and newspaper advertising. I handled much magazine advertising, much direct mail, some newspaper promotion, publicity, and public relations.

The rule of thumb in most places was, “*if it is printed and runs over four pages, give it to Jack to handle.*” I produced catalogs, one running to over 1200 pages, and wrote training manuals, engineering handbooks, house organs, and similar works, including company histories. Thus, I published within the corporate sector.

The second aspect was my introduction to the business side of operations. In publishing, I felt engaged primarily in it as a cultural activity and not a “business.” Employees considered themselves professionals, not as mere workers. The executives felt they more like “conductors” in a symphony, than as mere managers.

LOS ANGELES

The years immediately after World War II were a period of renewed activity in many fields. People drove more after gasoline rationing ended. Returning servicemen started new enterprises. Older firms expanded or moved to new locations.

I worked in agencies in Fort Wayne, Chicago, and Los Angeles. I came to know printing procedures in general and still had an interest in books. Agency work occupied me from the summer of 1937 through 1945, or the end of World War II. By then I divorced, remarried, and moved back in Los Angeles. I had an itch to do a book of my own.

I tried free-lance writing with no special success, although I sold some articles to business magazines. In 1945-46, I worked on the big catalog running 1200 pages and gathered loose-leaf into a post binder. [The client felt] organizing such a project, especially the gathering and binding, was a big problem.

The Heinn Company, the binder manufacturer, became interested in a device I [created] to load the pages into the cover. They asked me to write a manual on how to produce such a catalog and I worked out the text. No price was stipulated and a colleague told me I should ask for \$750. This was a very high price, but asked, was paid, and even asked to join the Heinn Company staff. I declined, as I wanted to live in California or the Southwest. I thus had \$750 in a lump sum for the first time. My agency salary was \$300 a month, and I was not accustomed to saving regularly.

[As explained in the *Stagecoach Press* chapter, I used all the proceeds to fund my first book: *A Guide Book to Highway 66*. I learned by raw experience both the processes for physical creation and the many attendant business aspects of publishing a new book.]

In business, “networking” originally meant establishing acquaintances who can lead you to still other acquaintances. Many do this through a church, lodge, or luncheon club affiliation. I began to [network through the publishing community].

Through the Darwin Clark agency, I met some of the best local printers. I met Grant Dahlstrom, whose Castle Press in Pasadena did the better printing for the Clark agency. I became acquainted with Ward Ritchie, who headed his own printing plant. When I purchased my small [Kelsey] platen press, I asked for his opinion as to its merits.

After I started my first book, I subscribed to *Publishers Weekly*, then in small format with a supplement devoted to antiquarian books. This supplement later was detached and became *Antiquarian Bookman's Weekly* or simply *AB*. It provided access to source material for many Stagecoach books starting with my second book in 1948.

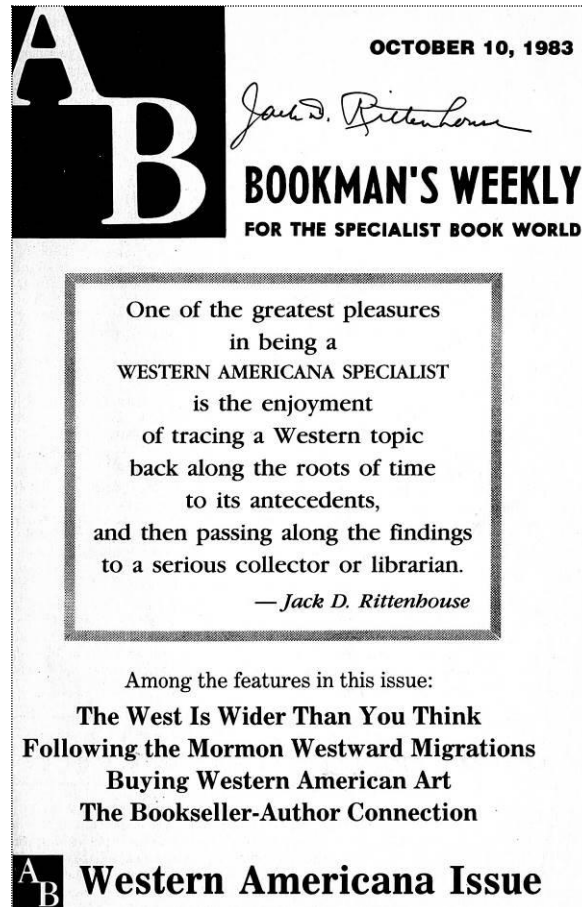


Figure 1 – West is Wider (Antiquarian Bookman's Weekly 10/10/1983)

[My article featured in this 1983 issue, “The West is Wider than You Think” appears redacted in the *West is Wider* chapter. It reflected decades of experience with AB.]

Dawson's Book Shop

During [my Los Angeles] years, I visited the rare bookshops in Los Angeles, especially Dawson's, then on Grand Street [in the 1940's].

Dawson Book Shop history (edited):

Muir Dawson (dead at 83) ran Los Angeles' oldest bookstore, Dawson's Book Shop for over 50 years. His son Michael owns and operates the shop, known for its rare books on California history and Western Americana.

*A partner since 1947, Muir specialized in rare books on the history of printing. He led several publishing projects in the business. Between 1906 and 2003, Dawson's Book Shop published 383 projects [including my 1962 Stagecoach Press book **Wendish Language Printing in Texas**]. "It is questionable if publishing is a moneymaking activity, but it certainly is fun," Dawson wrote.*

Muir retired in 1995 after working years in partnership with Glen, his older brother. Glen Dawson became a partner in 1936 and retired in 1992. The brothers moved the shop to Larchmont in 1968 after four Los Angeles locations.

Their father Ernest opened the shop in April 1905 as the cultural crossroads for the city for almost a century. Along with Jake Zeitlin and Harry Levinson, Ernest Dawson was credited with putting Los Angeles on an equal footing with New York and Chicago in the antiquarian book market.

Tragic events directed them towards California and Western books. The 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire destroyed most of the state's rare books. Ernest Dawson bought all the old California books he could locate and sold them to barren libraries, bookstores, and collectors at considerable profit.

Ernest published the city's first catalog of rare books in 1907. Four years later, he made his first buying trip to London and Rome with \$300. He shipped home dozens of crates. The bookshop catalogs were indexed for years at the UCLA [Lawrence] Powell Library and remain a valuable tool for bibliographers and librarians. The Dawson brothers helped UCLA librarian Lawrence Clark Powell build up the University's Special Collections after World War II.

After a course in printing at Scripps College in 1949, Muir Dawson began building the shop's inventory of books devoted to fine printing and book art. Intrigued with the work of early 19th century British wood engraver Thomas Bewick, he gradually added woodblocks and other artifacts of printing history.

- Myrna Oliver, Los Angeles Times, 2/24/2005

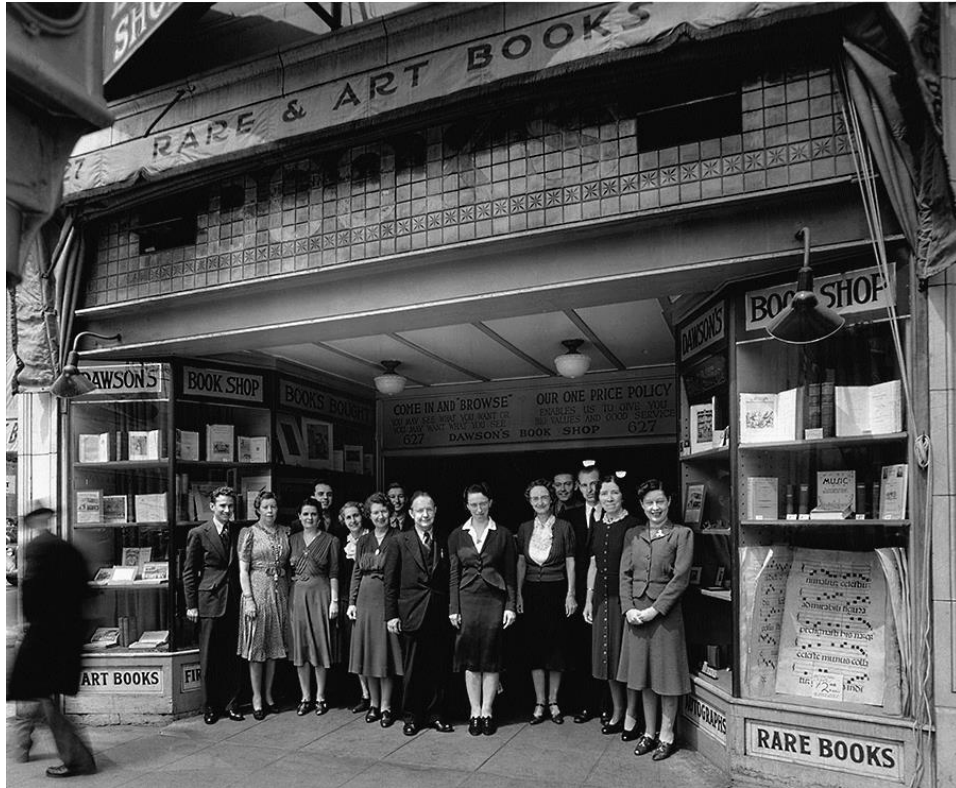


Figure 2 - Ernest Dawson celebrating 35th anniversary (Dawson Books, 1940)

Since 1905, Dawson's Book Shop was a leading source for rare and out of print books in California history, Western Americana, and photography. Ernest Dawson, in 1907, produced the first catalog of rare books issued in Los Angeles.

After three moves downtown and a transfer to [his sons] Glen and Muir Dawson, the shop settled on Larchmont Boulevard in Hollywood in 1968. After 105 years, Dawson's closed the Larchmont location in 2010. Michael Dawson continues [scaled-down operations] from his home in Los Angeles

<https://dawsonbooks.com/index.php/about/> (2020, Edited)

Nacent Antiquarian Trade

[Glen Dawson gave me just enough encouragement to begin research on my second book *American Horse-Drawn Vehicles* published in 1948. Blocked by the bank to fund this second book, I entered into special arrangements with lithographer Jack Dillon and bookbinder Earle Grey. In sum, they got their costs returned before I received anything from book sales. The particulars of creating and the bootstrap funding of this book appear in the *Stagecoach Press* chapter.]

Copies [of my “wagon book”] sold through the book trade, and I soon had a mailing list of dealers everywhere. There was a curious after-effect. Readers asked for the other books cited in its bibliography, where I identified the source of each picture used and mentioned many source books used.

Except for the carriage [reference] books, I was only a book accumulator and not a book collector. When people wrote, I sold off the reference works I collected while writing that book. I continued to sell items from my research collection on the wagon book.

Other people offered to sell books [to me], and with many multiple orders, I bought these books and resold them. I began to sell other books of that type, and found myself in an afterhours and weekend business as a bookseller. I had no real competition in this special field. I knew which libraries bought my book and therefore had special collections, and I learned which individuals around the country were interested in this field.

Within two years, I bought books from Italy, England, and rare book dealers, and sold them to collectors, using mimeographed catalog or lists. Thus, I began an [accidental] antiquarian book business.

Everett Miller (Car Designer)

My wagon book brought me into touch with Everett Miller, a collector who specialized in transportation. Everett designed custom-built bodies for the automobiles of Hollywood stars. He designed the car body for Tom Mix, who wanted a "touch of the flavor of a stagecoach" without being a true carriage. Everett said that he had no reference works on stagecoaches and made a long search. He resolved then to remedy this, so everywhere he went he picked up anything on any phase of transportation, especially land vehicles, as long as it was something he did not already have and cost less than fifty cents.

Soon, he had great piles of automakers' literature, early automotive operators' manuals, and catalogs of all kinds. He stripped auto ads from tons of old magazines, and lined rows of shelves with books. When I met him in 1950, he housed his collection in a small building of corrugated aluminum, with rows of file cabinets covering over 3000 different makes of American autos. He was an independent research consultant on transportation. I believe his library was still intact although it moved from the town of Glendale.

Carriage Trade

Issues of *The Hub* magazine [of the late 1800's] often carried fine color plates of carriages. Makers in local carriage shops showed these to prospective customers, who could indicate the type and style of vehicle they wanted. I had a matched set of twelve of these original [color] prints on my living room wall, [and much later sold by Charlotte.]



Figure 3 - Horseless Carriage Prints (H. Briley 2004)

I sold many prints to Disney Studios executive Harry Tytle, a great collector. I sometimes unbound an annual issue that I bought for three dollars. I rebound such an issue in marbled board covers [as a hardback book] that sold at five dollars each.

Some issues carried prize-winning plans for carriages such as broughams, landaus, or barouches. I had several plans transferred to film before selling the original. I sold portfolios of these plans (run off in blueprint houses) for up to ninety dollars a set.

Harry Dale (Los Angeles Bookman)

The bookman I spent the most time with was Harry Dale. His shop was a half-basement near my agency office on Sixth Street in Los Angeles. I often helped him unpack, price, and arrange books, and he visited our house a few times. Shortly after 1948, Harry moved to a shop on Spring Street. He was absent for a few days and when I next saw him he looked haggard and unshaven, as though ill. No such misfortune, as he instead struck a rich lode and mined it without let-up. A dealer in sheet music in Los Angeles handled only secondhand material and did well with the film studios. The studio market declined and the dealer sold his tons of [old] material to Harry Dale at next to nothing.

Harry leafed through the music wondering what irrational impulse caused him to buy this junk. Then, he saw a sheet reading “words by Mary Baker Eddy”, a Christian Science item. Another had the imprint of a Midwestern town's printer, and Harry knew that it was one of the first imprints from that town.

He thought, “*Why not sell them as collectors' pieces rather than to musicians?*”

He leafed through a pile finding several old pieces with the word 'Alabama' in the title; he wrote to the University of Alabama library offering them the set at fifteen dollars; they [immediately] wired an acceptance.

It demonstrated an important lesson in creative selling: namely, get away from the ordinary and try to see a new facet for a product. Do not sell music as music. Sell it for some other desirable aspect, by locale, by subject, by author, or by printer.

Therefore, Harry spent days and nights tearing open old bundles, sorting, sending quotes, and filling orders. He offered me the chance to buy all I wanted at a penny per item but I declined, as selling in this specialized field did not interest me.

We moved to Sierra Madre, a suburb of Pasadena, for I still worked at the Clark agency. I now had room for books, although still housed in orange crates stacked on their side.

Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America

In 1949, the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA) formed. Glen Dawson invited me to join in their first year, as a member of the Southern California chapter as an early member, although not as charter member.

They first admitted part-time dealers as me although later they became stricter. I attended the meetings and came to know the bookmen from the professional side rather than as a customer. I thus met on a personal and social level, some of the great antiquarian rare bookmen of that time and region, such as Glen and Muir Dawson, Jake Zeitlin, Charles Yale, Louis Epstein, and many others. It was a wonderful education.

Zamorano Club

Ward Ritchie, the printer, proposed me in 1949 for membership in the Zamorano Club, a group of rare book enthusiasts in Los Angeles. Membership was limited to fifty active, resident members. Admission was by invitation and they screened prospective members. [Commercial] booksellers then were not admitted to remove any possibility of commercialism. I was admitted and met a widening circle of friends.

It included men from the Huntington Library: Leslie and Carey Bliss, Edwin Carpenter; local historians such as William Robinson; Frederick Hodge, the anthropologist; Dr. Henry Raup Wagner, the bibliographer; the printers Ward Ritchie, Grant Dahlstrom, and Gordon Holmquist; and lawyers, physicians, and scholars, many of them successful and well to-do. Of all of these, I knew Lawrence “Larry” Clark Powell longest and best.

The Zamorano Club explained its early history in 2016 (redacted):

The Zamorano Club of Los Angeles began at a dinner held on 10/19/1927, in the University Club at 614 South Hope Street.

On 3/29/1928, the Club was named for Agustín Vicente Zamorano, the first known printer in California, operating a press in Monterey in 1834. Governor José Bautista Figueroa brought the press and a small amount of type to California in 1833. This press was later operated by Santiago Aguilar, by Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo at Sonoma, and by José de la Rosa. The press published broadsides and eleven small books in its early years —five books by Zamorano, two books by Vallejo at Sonoma, and four books by de la Rosa in 1843.

As of 4/25/1934, the Club rented on the fourth floor of the University Club. These quarters were relinquished after 2/1/1967 and the University Club building razed. On 2/15/1999, the Club sold its book collection at Pacific Book Auction Galleries.

<i>Presidents of the Zamorano Club</i>	[as known by Jack Rittenhouse]
<i>1937-1938 Henry R. Wagner</i>	[Dr. Henry Raup Wagner, bibliographer]
<i>1952-1953 Ward Ritchie</i>	[Printer]
<i>1953-1954 William W. Robinson</i>	[Historian]
<i>1955-1956 Lawrence Clark Powell</i>	[UCLA Librarian]
<i>1961-1962 Carl S. Dentzel</i>	[Author]

www.zamoranoclubla.org/history

The club had a room in the old University Club, a gentlemen’s club but not connected with any university. The big round table held a dozen men, usually sufficient.

Their one common bond was in book collection. Their interests spanned countries and fields. Dr. Elmer Belt, for example, had a magnificent collection of Leonardo da Vinci.

Members met each Wednesday noon for lunch with food brought up from the kitchen downstairs. At our informal luncheons and monthly dinner meetings, I came to know Carl Dentzel and dozens of authors whose names I knew only from title pages of books.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

This whole world opened to sit at a luncheon table with Frederick Webb Hodge, Henry Wagner, and people like that. I am just sitting there soaking it up. I got interested in books of the West. When I needed a better press, I found an old beat-up Colts Armory press. Ward Ritchie said, "That's a good machine."

It was a joy to participate in the luncheons. There was no program. Anyone could speak, on any subject, but no one held the floor for over a minute or two before yielding. Anyone could bring a guest. Prominent people in the book world were invited, such as Alfred Knopf [from New York] whom I had not seen in over a dozen years.

One conversation dealt with Candelario's curio shop in Santa Fe, where two members had once seen a trapdoor in the floor. They talked amusingly about how it might conceal great treasure. The subject came up the day a news item said that someone had opened this trapdoor and found valuable curios in the cellar. I had not yet been to Santa Fe, but this conversation led me later to a book discovery at [that same] Candelario's shop.

Each new member had to provide a printed keepsake of some sort, usually a booklet. If the member was a printer, and some had hobby or private presses or were commercial printers, he had to print it himself or he could pay a printer to do it. Tasteful design was the principal requirement, although each item had some merit in its content.

I made a small bibliography on dime novels that related to the early days of the petroleum industry in America. My wife and I handset the pages in Bembo and we printed it on nine by twelve-inch sheets of good paper usually used for special announcements. When folded once and hand-sewn, they made a neat booklet. The center section was an insert I had used in one of the agencies jobs done for an oil firm that reproduced several of the [dime novel] covers that I collected

At the monthly dinners, each new member read a paper. Mine was a short talk on book collecting on a low budget. Most talks were excellent and scholastic, ranging from early printing to recent travels. Each meeting announcement was a piece of excellent printing.

The club had no expenses beyond room rent, announcements, and such things. There was often a balance each year to commission a fine press printer to print a book given free to each member. None were ever sold. Each book was a gem.

The manners, enthusiasm, and intellectual sparkle of the Zamorano Club went a long way to smooth some rough spots on this Hoosier boy. The club sharpened my interest in Southwest books, while the papers at dinners broadened my knowledge of early printing.

Lawrence Clark Powell (Librarian)

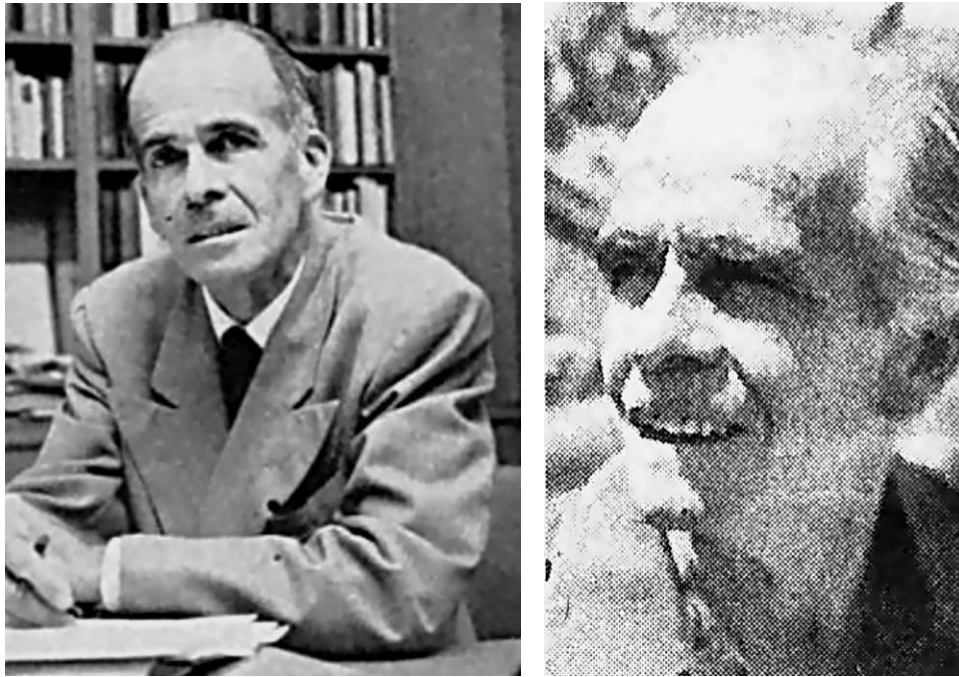


Figure 4 - Larry Powell (UCLA 1960, New Mexican 11/17/2012)

Wikipedia noted (edited):

Lawrence Clark Powell (1906–2001) was a librarian, bibliographer, literary critic, and author of over 100 books. Powell made significant contributions to the library profession, and wrote for the book-minded public. His interests reflected history and travel, especially the American Southwest, rare books, librarianship, the book trade, and book collections.

*During the Depression, he worked in rare books stores until Los Angeles City Librarian Althea Warren, in Powell's words, 'plucked me out of **Jake Zeitlin's bookshop** and sent me off to Berkeley.' Powell returned to work for Warren at the Central Library. Powell next worked in acquisitions for the UCLA library in 1938. He was **University Librarian** from 1944 to 1961, and head librarian of the Clark Memorial Library from 1944 until 1966. After retiring from UCLA in 1966, Powell moved to Tucson in 1971, as Professor in Residence for nearly two decades with the University Of Arizona Graduate School Of Library Science.*

*Powell was a president of the Bibliographical Society of America, the California Library Association, the **Zamorano Club** of Los Angeles, the Roxburghe Club of Los Angeles, the Caxton Club of Chicago, and the Grolier Club of New York.*

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Clark_Powell

Marc Simmons, in his column *Trail Dust*, wrote:

*Lawrence Clark Powell promoted the literary legacy of New Mexico and Arizona. He published in 1974 his book *Southwest Classics, Creative Literature of the Arid Lands*. His "Southwest" is limited to what he calls its "heartland," meaning New Mexico and Arizona.*

What sets those two states apart from Texas on the east and California to the west is, in his words, that they form "an area distinguished by a tri-cultural fusion of Indian, Hispano, and Anglo, plus an unmistakable landscape."

*In his introduction, Powell acknowledged that he wrote about "only a few of the books that comprise the literary classics of the region," To be exact, the number he included, with a chapter on each, in *Southwest Classics*, was twenty six, a bare sampling of worthy candidates.*

*A few examples are Josiah Gregg and Susan Magoffin's two historical accounts of their separate experiences on the Santa Fe Trail, and Charles Lummis's early interpretive description of New Mexico's folk cultures, *The Land of Poco Tiempo*.*

*A title on everyone's list is Willa Cather's novelized treatment of the life of Jean Lamy, **Death Comes for the Archbishop**. Erna Fergusson earns a place on that list with her *Dancing Gods*. Powell dubs that masterful book on ceremonial Indian dances (1937) as hands down "a classic of Southwestern literature."*

*Santa Fe author Oliver LaFarge is included for his Navajo novel, *Laughing Boy*, which won him a Pulitzer Prize. Powell only dealt with deceased writers. The tally of writers on Arizona under Powell's scrutiny was ten. He listed a single Texas author, J. Frank Dobie.*

I fortunately knew both Frank Dobie and Larry Powell. The knowledge and inspiration from them greatly influenced my career as a Southwest historian.

"Southwestern writers cast wide literary net on region", The New Mexican, 11/17/2012, Page A-8 [The rest of this article appears below under Frank Dobie.]

Jake Zeitlin: Books

I always visited the rare-book shops around town. I often visited Jake Zeitlin's "Big Red Barn" bookshop out near Hollywood. I once saw Frank Dobie for the first time there [Texas folklorist, 1888-1964, and discussed later].

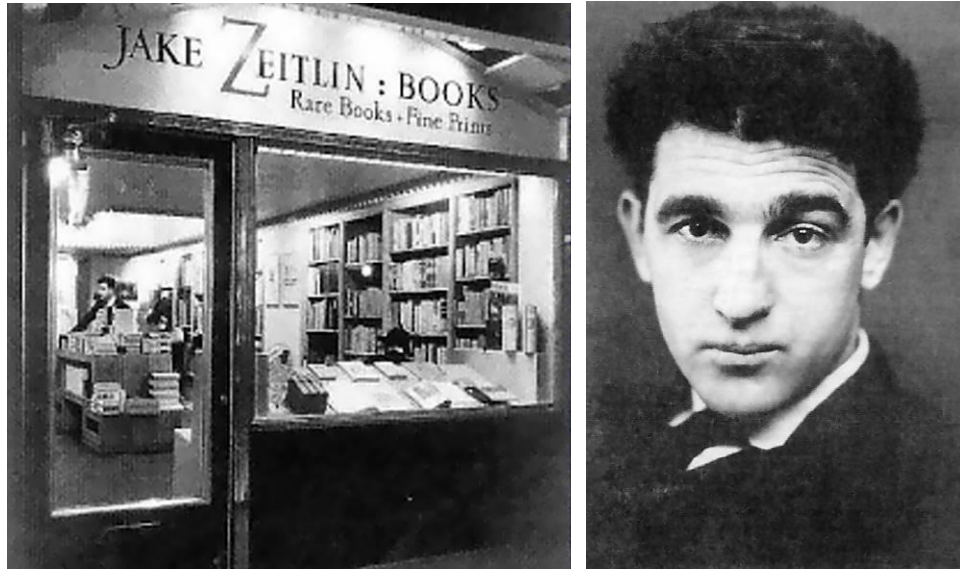


Figure 5 - Zeitlin Books (socialarchhistory.blogspot.com) - portrait (W.Connell 1928)

Michael Dawson, of Dawson Book Shop, wrote (summarized and edited):

Jake Zeitlin brought together artists and writers of the 1920s and 1930s. Fresh from Texas, he worked in the rare books department at Bullocks in 1926 and then sold briefly from his home. By 1928, he opened Jake Zeitlin: Books. His shop, open until 1987, endures as a symbol of downtown bohemian Los Angeles.

Lacking gathering places for a vibrant arts community, Zeitlin's shop immediately drew local writers, painters, photographers, designers and architects. Most early friends were new to town and drawn quickly to this intellectual oasis.

He attracted Will Connell, who began an informal series of portraits [including one of Jake above] with props against an 18th century English landscape. The style parodied the 19th century cabinet card portrait. Zeitlin described those informal portraits: "Will Connell was very much a friend of important writers and artists in Los Angeles including Merle Armitage, Bill Conselman, Lloyd Wright and Lawrence Tibbett. When somebody interesting came into town, we roped them in. We had Louis Untermeyer and Lewis Mumford. The routine was they came into the shop, and I took them over for Will to shoot these old-fashioned photographs. We all went to dinner to a French restaurant on West Sixth Street, Rene and Jean... and we would then gather back at my shop, talk, make a lot of noise, argue, and generally have a hell of a good time."

*These literary soirees attracted a [sufficient] following that by October 1929 they started a magazine to articulate their ideas. The first issue of **Opinion** magazine appeared during the stock market crash that signaled the end of prosperity and the hedonism of the 1920's. **Opinion** was the product of a bohemian intellectualism alienated from the crass materialism of the Southern California boom economy and a fragmented, formless, and chaotic social landscape.*

*[The magazine railed] against the lunatic gospel [preached from Los Angeles by] Bob Shuler [a popular but opinionated radio evangelist from Trinity Methodist Church] and Aimee McPherson [a wildly popular but controversial radio faith healer/founder of the Foursquare denomination]. Los Angeles historian Carey McWilliams contributed a witty denunciation to the December 1929 issue under the title, "**Anti-Shuler Serum.**"*

www.historicechopark.org/id76.html

Rare Books

I went often to the shop of Nick Kovach who dealt in back-number technical journals for libraries. We received many such journals at the Clark agency for we ran advertisements in them. I traded back runs to Nick for old issues of *Scientific American*, which I began to collect for the years 1850-1880.

I went often to Louis Epstein's Pickwick Bookshop, on Hollywood Boulevard. He dealt about equally in new and old books.

Sierra Madre Bibliography

I tried to collect a set everything printed in Sierra Madre. This little town only one mile square had only one print shop but astonished me by how many different items I found done on local hobby presses. When I left Sierra Madre, I turned this [collection] over to Edwin Carpenter [of the Zamorano Club]. Many of my leads came through articles in the local weekly newspaper publicizing my interest. I picked up other pieces at rummage sales or through word-of-mouth connections.

My main work was still at the Clark agency and I thought would always be so. In 1949, we started advertising for Baroid Division of the National Lead Company. This firm produced chemicals used in mixing the mud-like fluid poured down the drill stem while drilling an oil well. It was common for a drilling firm to spend \$100,000 on these chemicals while drilling a single well. I designed their magazine, *Baroid News Bulletin* that went to customers, and took several awards for its typographic design.

HOUSTON

Things had to change and in 1950, Baroid planned to its main headquarters from Los Angeles to Houston, closer to the fields of major activity. They wanted the agency to continue handling the account, so the agency experimented with a branch office. As the junior all around hand, I took it over. It meant a slight gain in salary, but I did not relish the move away from California. All men above me flatly refused or were not equipped to handle an almost one-man operation. The agency agreed to move all of our furniture, books, and even my hobby [Gally] printing press, which alone weighed 1300 lbs.

The agency move occurs in the *Advertising Years* chapter, but I mention it here because relates to book collecting.

Texas Collection

I knew little about Texas, so I set out to build a Texas collection. Like Everett Miller [the Car Designer], I ran around Los Angeles picking up anything less than a dollar. Many pieces cost ten to fifty cents. [The Long Beach “Acres of Books” (1934-2008) was one such used-book emporium.] The collection included local history pamphlets, rodeo programs, reports on oil wells, some novels, textbooks, and a few clothbound books.

I was surprised to find some good books. The 300 items altogether cost 200 dollars [in 1950]. The collection was immediately worth five times what I had paid, chiefly because it was a collection. Of course, a book collector never counts the hours he spends in the hunt, any more than an angler measures his hours against the retail value of his catch.

Moving these books to Texas posed a problem. The moving firm quoted a rate of ten cents a pound. Book rate parcel post was only five cents per pound. I mailed the books.

I bought one cubic foot cartons at a corrugated box company for ten cents each, just the right weight to handle easily. I bought a hundred identical boxes. We packed and marked each box by subject. This made it easy to pack, mail, and unpack.

In late summer of 1951, we arrived in Houston to open the branch agency office. I gathered this material initially to inform myself about Texas, but it had a salutary side effect. Having no room for books in our first apartment, I put the material in bookcases along the office wall. Texans who saw it got the opinion that here was a man who honored their state by building such a collection, and who most already knows much of its history. I did not disillusion them but added more to the collection.

The advertising business took first precedence. There was no time for books in those first months. Even so, as explained in *Advertising Years*, there was insufficient volume of business to support a branch. We had only the Baroid account, which grew to better than \$300,000 gross billing a year, but there was little other local business we could get. It all went to local agencies who already had years of hometown acquaintance.

Reuse of Text

In 1951, I received a few copies of a book of articles I wrote, *Permian Pete and His Fabulous Adventures*. For a few years previously, I wrote tall tales based on oil fields for a quarterly company magazine [that I produced] for the Lane-Wells Company, a Los Angeles firm offering technical services to oil well drillers. From the start, I thought the tales might become a book. Sure enough, when they wanted a Christmas keepsake for its customers, they [asked me permission to issue] the Permian Pete stories as a book.

This [reuse of text illustrated] a principle acquired through [advertising agency expert] Lynn Ellis. Try to foresee all possible uses and applications of an idea and design it from the start to fit those [future] uses.

Another [reuse of text] example was production of a technical handbook for Baroid. They wanted a handbook for years but never got their work organized to produce a book of two or three hundred pages. I designed their company magazine in a format of six by nine inches. I suggested that they produce the book in installments in the magazine.

By this method, they could start anywhere, publish any pertinent section as it was done, and by using consistent typography and layouts, they could produce the handbook later from reproduction proofs of the magazine pages. They adopted this method and in four years, the entire book was published. Since each section was produced first in the magazine, their final cost was negligible. The only expensive section was a history of oil well drilling fluids, which I researched and wrote. I printed this as a separate pamphlet in 1954, with the title *The History of Drilling Mud*. Since I wrote it for them as their advertising agency, it never bore my author's name.

Another example of this multiple use was a small bibliography I did on books about horse drawn vehicles. [That bibliography became my] *Carriage Hundred* book.

I often wondered why specialist antiquarians dealing extensively in books on a particular subject, did not issue more bibliographies. Some did such as Ray Riling, who wrote a bibliography on powder flasks, and Richard Wormser, who wrote a book on early American trade catalogs, and Van Allen Bradley, who does price guides on rare books. Many such booksellers, with immense knowledge and familiarity with books, never produced bibliographies.

Oil Articles

During my years 1951-1960 in the advertising business, I published very little on my own. I wrote 250 articles on the history of the West or on the history of petroleum.

We published most of these in company magazines such as Baroid's [under] a dozen different pen names. I had three hundred source folders, where I filed clippings, notes, and illustrations. When a folder was full, the story was ready to write. The pay was good then at ten cents a word. [Charlotte later donated these folders to the Rio Grande Historical Collections of the New Mexico State University Library.]

The oil industry economy changed around 1958. The great reserves of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Near East oil fields got tapped. A barrel of crude oil could be laid down at a refinery on the Houston Ship Channel, brought from those countries for less than a barrel of oil produced and brought by pipeline from a Texas oil field only two hundred miles away. The result was a decline in domestic oil well drilling.

I foresaw tight belts in the local advertising fraternity, so I found my own solution in a merger into the Marsteller Company, one of the ten largest advertising agencies handling industrial advertising in the United States. With a big staff payroll, I had no reserves, so I was glad to become part of the Marsteller group. I felt that the old “branch agency” story would be repeated from the decade before, so I prepared for book publishing again.

In 1960, the Marsteller Company felt the pinch of this economic change. Only their other branch offices handling a wide range of accounts were doing well. The firm closed our Houston office. They offered me a choice of transferring to Pittsburgh or New York, but our family yearned for New Mexico, so I moved there as soon as fortune permitted.

Professor Walter Rundell, Jr. at Del Mar College in Texas used my library of oil industry history as his bibliographic source. He later issued it as a pamphlet by the business school at Harvard. A specialist dealer sold my oil library to the University of Wyoming.

I was nominally a specialist mail-order bookseller and maintained my membership in the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. On 2/7/1961, they elected me to their board of governors to represent the Southwest to serve a four-year term. I attended the 2/1962 board meeting in New York City, but never gave the post the [needed] time. I served one term, which gave me insight into the East Coast book trade.

Leaving Advertising

After a year in Houston, the advertising agency's home office discontinued the branch operation. Only on very large accounts with a widespread operation can branches be successful. If the branches handle only small local or regional accounts there comes a point when the home office can add little.

Darwin Clark asked me to resign the account and head back to Los Angeles. I crowded the age of forty, beyond which anyone in advertising tops the summit and starts downhill if he does not own a share of the business. I would return to California with the stigma of failure or at least of non-success. I left the agency, stayed in Houston, and opened my own office to specialize in the production of printed materials. As a bit of [financial] security, I still did many things for the Baroid account.

In summer 1952, I opened Rittenhouse and Company on West Gray in Houston. One of my first contracts was completion of the Baroid sales manual, done in sections. For another contract, I handled the design, editing, and manufacture of a hardcover engineering book for the firm Cauco on the use of natural gas, often present with petroleum, to gas-lift the oil to the surface. My office grew to a staff of ten. It involved much overtime work for me, and I did minimal private press operation or bookselling.

I had a loose cooperative arrangement with Jack Valenti who had just launched his own business. He busily handled public relations for Texas firms. He did much work on Lyndon Johnson's political campaign at that time and later as an aide when Johnson became president. I referred any PR business to Valenti. Likewise, he turned over to me some leads involving handbooks and longer printed works.

By 1953, we bought a home in the Spring Branch section of Houston, and reassembled my printing press, on which only a Christmas card was done since I left Los Angeles.

Carriage Trade Close-Out

I gathered up all remaining carriage materials for one large list. Wesley Jung, a collector in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, started a carriage museum. He bought everything on the list and that wiped out my "carriage trade" all in one sale. After this sale, I dealt less in out-of-print material although I kept my hand in. There were more residual after-effects.

Back East, Colonel Paul Downing organized a national association of carriage collectors. I sent him my list of every individual who had bought either my wagon book or who had bought any subsequent material I handled. With that list, the association got off to a good start. I never joined for my interest was as an author and not as a carriage collector.

I eventually acquired the remains of an old mountain hack and kept it in my back yard in Albuquerque until 1975, which I gave it to the novelist Jack Schaefer for his yard. He sold it and split the receipts with me when he moved to Santa Barbara.

Texas Book Shops

As far as books were concerned, I found Houston less interesting than Los Angeles. As [geographically] large as Texas is, its entire population in 1951 barely equaled Los Angeles County. Likewise, I found the entire population of New Mexico roughly matched Harris County, Texas, in which Houston is located.

It was therefore natural that the entire state of Texas had only as many bookshops as all of Los Angeles County, although the ratio was less. Texas increased the number of book outlets, but in late 1951, only a few shops interested me.

Joseph Petty ran an antiquarian shop downtown before he moved to Victoria, Texas. His assistant, Beverly Bond, went to New York City to work in a publishing house before starting her own service as a book advertising and promotion consultant. Beverly collected books by or about Thomas Hardy. Joe was a Civil War enthusiast.

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

*Back in the early 1950s, I was so interested in the West, from the Zamorano Club influence, the influence of those people had stuck with me. I could safely spend five per cent of my annual take home pay on anything that would improve my ability to do a job. The most obvious thing was to buy bibliographies, such as Wright Howes' **US-IANA**, or very soon Addams' **Six Guns and Saddle Leather**.*

Sometimes I bought things that were bad for me. I was in Fort Worth one time and there was a wonderful old bookstore on a run-down street. I could not find the place again. I bought in there Dibden, a great man, a good man. If you are getting into that kind of literature, which I never did because I never had English literature [in college]. However, I had heard the name Dibden, so boy here was a cheap set of Dibden, five dollars for three big fat volumes. I sold them to somebody else. I never used them.

I bought books and books and books. My idea was to buy them new when they first came out. You could buy Streeter's bibliography on Texas for ten dollars a volume when they first came out. I had to use those things.

I did a lot of my work at home. My father was a machinist. The craftsman or artisan had his own tools. He did not use company tools (which anybody could use, nobody claimed, and nobody sharpened) were generally considered inferior. Every machinist worth his salt had his own kit of dies, gauges, and things that he brought in. I believed in the principal of having your own [books].

Herbert Fletcher (Houston Bookman)

The senior bookman of Houston was Herbert Fletcher, who operated out of an apartment as a sideline. He published some under the imprint of the Anson Jones Press, which published some fine Texana books. I never knew him well. He was rather gruff and abrupt on my [sole] visit. I never went back although I did not dislike him.

He later moved from Houston to Salado. Every Texas bookman who knew Fletcher had an anecdote to tell. Two examples here act as mere [second-hand] hearsay.

The Texas State Historical Society held its annual convention, usually at the Driskill Hotel in Austin. One feature of the affair was an auction of books donated by members.

One year, the auction struggled against jackhammer work that tore up the street outside. The auctioneer was loud enough but the audience could not [easily] whisper to each other. The auction proceeded with no special excitement until the jackhammers [briefly] stopped to allow half the audience to hear Fletcher speak in a loud whisper.

“That’s the only valuable book in the entire lot.”

The bidding went through the roof on that specific book!

In an instance of salesmanship combined with showmanship, Fletcher once acquired a truly fine book as a real rarity. He had a prospective customer but first he visited the Fondren Library of (then) Rice Institute and said that he (Fletcher) had a book of great value and interest. He wanted to display it in the library so students could see it before he sold it. The library staff prominently displayed the book in a pedestal case.

Fletcher then asked his prospective buyer to go view the book considered so valuable that the Fondren Library displayed it prominently. The prospect went, saw, and bought.

Ed Bartholomew (Houston Bookman)

Other than Herbert Fletcher and Joseph Petty, the first book antiquarian I met in Houston was Ed Bartholomew [1914-2003], a man of tremendous energy, enthusiasm, ability, and imagination. [At nearly the same age, we became lifelong friends.]

[After I moved to New Mexico, our family visited] Sophie and Ed near Christmas at their mountain place at Madera Springs, west of Toyahvale, Texas. In 1964, I drove to Cisco to spend the night with them. They bought the Victor Hotel there on a sheriff's sale and fixed it up for resale. They likewise visited us. For the first time in almost twenty years in 1971, neither of us visited. UNM Press pressured us to work all possible days in December and we called off that winter trip. In 1973, our family visited their [new?] home in Fort Davis, Texas. Our dear friend Sophia died on 8/20/1982 in Fort Davis.

Ed deserves a whole chapter. Here I want to mention only some of his experiences with books. He did some newspaper and pulp writing and published such things as a guide to flying small private planes. I learned from Ed and him from me.

In 1951, Ed published his own history of Houston, printed by a book printer. I learned about it through a full-page ad in **AB** and visited him. Following World War II, Ed had a big, corrugated metal building at the fringe of the prior Houston airport. He dealt in surplus aviation parts with much of his stock bought from government sales. He began dealing in old books and now sold his new *Houston Story*.

George Bacon wrote this short biography (edited):

[Edward Ellsworth Bartholomew] *was a prolific researcher and author of non-fiction books about the American Old West, occasionally writing under the pseudonym "Jesse Ed Rascoe". He had a particular interest in outlaws and gunfighters. He published about such notable Western hard cases as Wild Bill Longley, Cullen Baker and Black Jack Ketchum. His most enduring contribution is his meticulously researched 2-volume biography of gunfighter Wyatt Earp. The books, "Wyatt Earp: The Untold Story" (1963) and "Wyatt Earp: The Man and the Myth" (1964), started a trend among Earp researchers that led to a partial debunking of the popular legend created by movies and television.*

- www.findagrave.com

Ed's chief interest was Texana and on the outlaws and lawmen of the entire West. In the early 1950s, he travelled eastward to attend the great auction sale of the famous Holliday collection. En route, he stopped off in Washington DC to scout the bookshops. One store sold out, "*Building coming down, everything must go!*" The sale was in progress for several days when Ed arrived. A quick look showed that there were still many good Western items, so Ed asked about the price of the entire store. It was in a medium four-figure range, so Ed plunked down half of the money and offered to take over the shop immediately and to pay the balance in two weeks. The deal was accepted.

Ed locked the doors, checked every shelf and skimmed off the cream of the remaining stock, moving it to another room. He wired for his wife and daughter to come to help him, along with another Houston bookseller, Bill Morrison. Bill just started in full-fledged bookselling, although he did some initial bookselling in Corpus Christi.

They continued to run the massive sale, selling books at low prices, then by the pound, and finally by “*all you can carry for two dollars*”. Ed still attended the Holliday sale. By the end of two weeks, Ed paid off the shop, covered all expenses, and made some profit, besides acquiring the select stock set aside from his first skimming.

He shipped the remaining vast quantity of ordinary books to Houston in a semi-trailer. I learned of this at his warehouse at the [former] Houston airport and found a monolithic pile of books, stacked solidly ten feet wide, seven feet high, and over forty feet long.

"Help yourself to a free book, any book," he said.

I circled the pile scanning the outer layer. As much as I love books, I could not find one copy of real interest. Who needs the 1882 report of the Philadelphia waterworks?

Ed grouped books by title and subject and mailed out many lists with fair success. As the huge pile dwindled, he ran sales at twenty-five cents per book and eventually by the “*all you can carry*” method. Lacking tables or shelves for so many, he simply stood the books spine up in rows on the [warehouse] floor.

After he moved to western Texas, at Madera Springs, he continued to sell by mail, with declining results. The last big lot went to a western university library that neared its millionth volume and bought five thousand books. Even then, there were many books left over; very common items, damaged or incomplete books not worth repairing. Ed borrowed a small bulldozer, dug a pit, and buried the residue.

Ed drove as hard a bargain as anyone, but he was generous beyond my belief. Ed had great affection for an old justice of the peace in a small west Texas town. The old-timer was once in financial straits. Ed took an IBM executive typewriter to a resort cabin and wrote in isolation for a week. In that time, he wrote the folk legend of a steer that caused a dispute during which a cowboy died. They branded the steer M for murder and turned it loose to roam as a pariah for the rest of its life. Ed typed off the paper plates for multilith printing and ran off a couple of hundred copies. He then had them saddle stitched and presented the whole lot to the old gentleman so he could get the proceeds.

Noah Rose, a Texas photographer active after the 1880s, took many photographs of noted Texans and historic places. He copied old family portraits, kept the negative, and returned the original along with an enlargement. The entire lot ran to a few thousand pictures and was possibly the largest photo archive of its kind in Texas. After Rose's death, Ed acquired the collection and for several of years furnished prints. He later sold the collection of negatives to the University of Oklahoma library.

Ed knew the general and natural history of the borderland along the Rio Grande. He was so good that when John Steinbeck once worked on a book, he and Ed rode around for a week in Steinbeck's car while the author asked Ed about places, plants, mountains, and other aspects of the scenery.

For the next ten or fifteen years, Bartholomew wrote and self-published books on noted outlaws. I designed the title pages of some, especially a big folio page for his *Biographical Album of Western Gunfighters*, on which I set the type at my Stagecoach Press (for the title page only). A slight flaw in the offset printing put a slur down one side, but generally the job came out well and Ed signed over copy number one to me.

George Fuermann (Houston Writer)

George Fuermann wrote a non-political column of personal content for the *Houston Post*, a morning paper. George had a good library and appreciated books. He wrote at least three books describing the character of modern Texas.

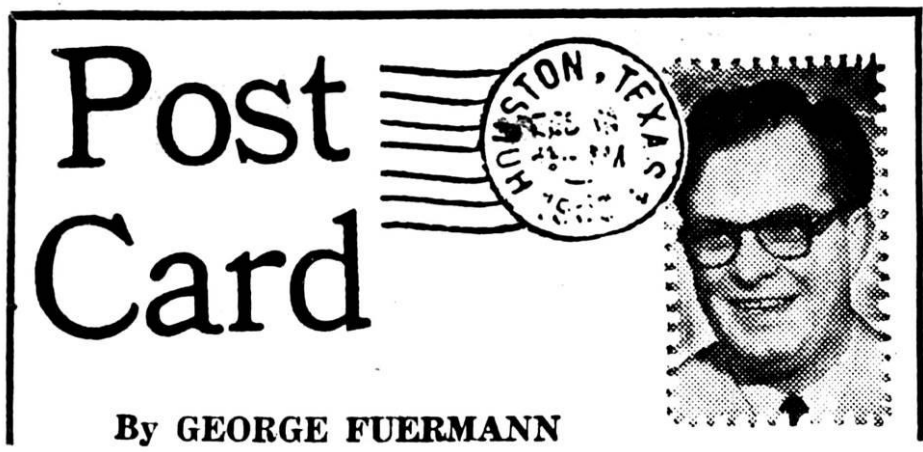


Figure 6 - George Fuermann – Houston Post 1955

George Fuermann wrote of Jack in the Houston Post (edited):

Jack is a friendly, inquisitive man and a staggering chain-smoker, who four years ago took to Texas as a duck takes to water.

As an advertising and public relations man with his own agency, he has by all odds the finest private oil library in a great oil city.

His hobby is hand-press work. He set [today's] guest column by hand in his print shop, which is to say his garage, from his growing collection of old type faces.

Everett DeGolyer, Sr (Dallas Collector)

I kept in touch with members of the Zamorano Club. I wrote to one nonresident member, Everett DeGolyer, Sr., of Dallas. He asked me to visit him whenever I was in Dallas. It did not take me long to find an excuse to go to Dallas. DeGolyer had a downtown office, with the firm of DeGolyer and MacNaughton, where he kept his library on the petroleum industry. This interested me because I collected books on the history of the oil industry.

I used [my book collection] in writing articles for Baroid and for my advertising work, since most of my clients came from the petroleum industry. Thus, I appreciated DeGolyer's library. A professional librarian cared for his office library. Imagine a collector [wealthy enough] to hire a librarian!

I knew what he meant when he pointed to an item and said,
"I have the first of McLaurin ... in both states."

DeGolyer once took me to his home in the suburbs [to view his] Southwestern collection in a room with shelves so high that he needed a travelling ladder to get to the top shelves. He showed me two copies of an early Spanish volume, one with a title page in black and red and the other with a title page done only in black. He expressed a curiosity about the [difference]. I explained that some early printers did not lock up two separate forms for color printing but simply blocked out certain lines with a frisket (a mask) and printed the [using the same form] for both black and red.

On other occasions, he took me to lunch at the Dallas Petroleum Club, then in the old Adolphus hotel. Few advertising men entered this sanatorium. Once, DeGolyer visited my second floor office on West Gray. He looked at my books on Texas and petroleum, by then housed on steel shelving along an entire wall. We talked of books and collecting for over an hour. When he was ready to leave, I asked him if I should call a cab.

"No need to" he replied, *"I have one waiting."*

I looked out of my window to find a cab with its meter running. I felt honored by the [costly] gesture. I continued an acquaintance with [his son] Ev DeGolyer, Jr., whom I saw each year at the Western History [Association] conference [until he died in 1977].

Charlotte in 10/1999 [transcribed]

Mr. DeGolyer left his book collection to Southern Methodist University in Texas, whom named a library after him. He invented a sound wave technique for the oil drilling process. [The DeGolyer Library contains special collections in the humanities, the history of business, science, and technology. It has rare books, manuscripts, photographs, and maps. - <http://www.smu.edu/cul/degolyer/>]

Carl Hertzog (El Paso Printer)

A significant friendship formed with Carl Hertzog, the noted El Paso printer. He visited Houston late in 1951 (or early in 1952) and came out to the Darwin Clark agency office.

“Let’s talk printing” was his introduction.

As part of the material needed for his trip, he brought along a copy of Ross Calvin’s *River of the Sun*, which he designed recently for the University of New Mexico Press. He pointed out factors in its design, telling how the colors came from the earth and the sun of the Southwest, and how part of the jacket design came from ancient Mimbres or Gila Indian pottery from along the Gila river, the subject of the book.

From Houston to El Paso the distance is over five hundred miles, so we did not see each other often. I learned more than I gave and these visits always became anticipated events. Carl died on 7/24/1984 in El Paso.

Fritz and Emilie Toepperwein (Boerne Printers)

The only other private press printer I knew then was Fritz Toepperwein. He was the public relations manager of a large brewery in San Antonio but lived a short distance out near the small town of Boerne.

Fritz and his wife Emilie produced beautiful children’s books with a Texas theme. They wrote and illustrated the books. They printed some books on their own press housed in its own little building. In later years, they did the typographic design and printed the books at the Boerne newspaper plant. The Toepperweins bound and finished the books.

Whenever possible, Hertzog, Toepperwein, and I, as a trio or in pairs, met in Austin during the annual State Historical Society meetings to feast on printing talk.

Font Hunting

Meanwhile, I added to my collection of old-fashioned printers’ type. In my travels around Texas, I carried a list of newspapers of 1890. In each new town, I sought out the local printer to buy type. [In 1981], there was a big demand for [sets of type fonts].

There were few of us [in the 1950s]. One of the best [font hunters] was William Thorniley of Seattle. He always seemed to precede me by a year or two. I rarely found a print shop where he left anything. [Despite this thoroughgoing competitor], I gathered fifty different fonts of original old-fashioned type in a short period.

Houston Civil War Round Table

It was through Joseph “Joe” Petty that I joined the [newly formed] Houston Civil War Round Table. This was an autonomous version of a national series of similar “tables,” with thirty or forty active members in Houston. We held monthly dinner meetings.

It was not an auxiliary of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, for sentiment was divided among members in Houston, although a slight majority favored the South and most of our interest was with Southern forces. Many men belonged because it was the only group in Houston with alert, inquisitive minds interested more in ideas than in business.

Each member needed an intellectual interest in some particular battle or officer, and eventually delivered a paper on that topic.

“*What battle are you fighting now?*” was the standard greeting.

Its membership resembled the Zamorano Club [of Los Angeles] and some functions were parallel. Members included attorneys Cooper Ragan and Palmer Bradley, book collectors and physicians, a newspaperman or two, a public relations man, bookseller Petty, etc.

The Houston Civil War Round Table described its history in 2016 (edited):

Our organization promotes impartial inquiry, study, and education about the American Civil War, its causes, and aftermath. We hold monthly meetings at The Hess Club at 5430 Westheimer to hear well-known experts on the war speak and answer questions.



*In May 1954, Houston businessman George Kirksey sponsored an organizational meeting in Chicago, his hometown. Joining him were several men of diverse backgrounds with both northern and southern sympathies: **Cooper Ragan, Palmer Bradley, Joseph Petty**, Walter Hebert, Andrew Jitkoff, George Charlton, W. Ferguson, Jr., and L. Daffan Gilmer. They launched the Houston Civil War Round Table, met monthly for dinner and a talk followed by a question-and-answer period. Twenty-three attended that first Houston meeting on 10/5/1954 at Guy's Restaurant (\$2.50 each, including tip).*

Members hear from the best Civil War teachers, writers, preservationists, purveyors of myths and legends, musicians, and re-enactors. Many young historians have been encouraged and challenged by these presentations.

www.houstoncivilwar.com

Authors formally read most papers. A member, Carl Bond, mimeographed copies on legal size paper, probably through the attorney offices of Ragan or Bradley. All members received copies. He held a few extras for future members.

Carl came to my house and set the type for a cover, which we printed. I supervised and occasionally helped set the type. While printed on equipment of the Stagecoach Press, it was not a Stagecoach Press item. We laid out the cover so that when the stapled sheets folded once across the middle, the 8.5x14 inch pages became a [pamphlet of] 7x8.5 inches, with the cover printed. These fit well in a bookcase.

While there were good collectors in Houston whom I never met, I definitely remember Cooper Ragan and Palmer Bradely [of the Civil War Round Table]. Cooper inherited a fine collection of Texana and Civil War material from his father and continued to extend this. Bradley had a similar collection ranging into other fields. Both [attorneys] had fine homes with an entire room as a library.

Louis Lanz, an elderly [member] of intense energy and far ranging curiosity, lived near the University of Houston and collected many signed documents relating to Texas history. He had the true collectors' instincts and unquenchable urge. He was not wealthy but poured all available funds into more items for his collection.

Texas Historian Writers

Of the great triumvirate of Texas [literati], Walter Webb [historian, 1888–1963], Frank Dobie [folklorist, 1888–1964], and Roy Bedichek [naturalist, 1878–1959], I never met Bedichek. Often the fourth member of their group was Frank Wardlaw [publisher, 1913–1989] of the University of Texas Press.

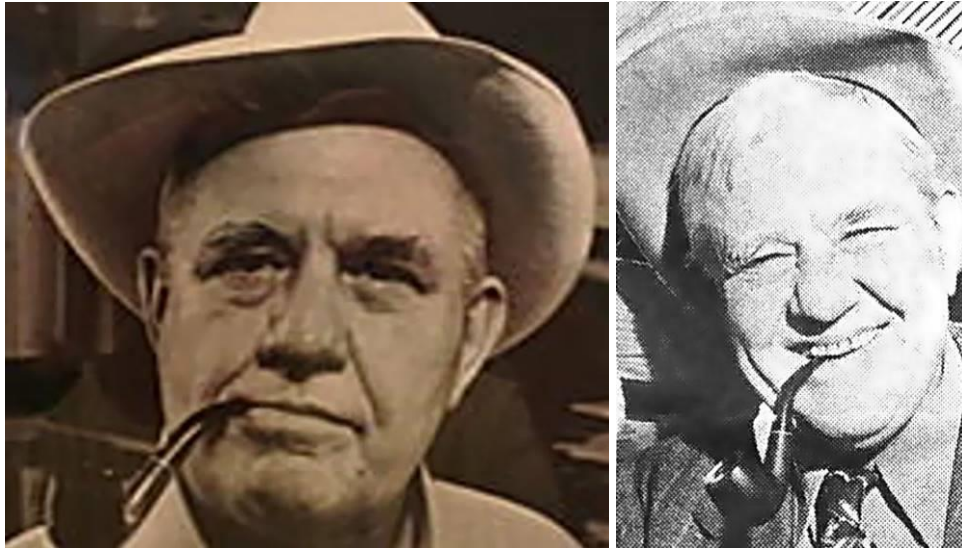


Figure 7 - Frank Dobie (National Portrait Gallery, New Mexican 11/17/2012)

Wikipedia noted (edited):

James Frank Dobie (1888–1964) wrote many books depicting the rich traditions of rural Texas of the open range. He had outspoken liberal views and a long personal war against bragging Texans, religious prejudice, restraints on individual liberty, and the assault of the mechanized world on the human spirit.

The publication in 1941 of The Longhorns was one of the best descriptions of the traditions of Texas Longhorn cattle. He was instrumental in saving the breed.

In 1939, Dobie began a Sunday column in which he routinely poked fun at Texas politics. A liberal Democrat, he once wrote, "When I get ready to explain homemade fascism in America, I can take my example from [Austin] Texas."

In 1944, after a fellow professor was fired from the University of Texas for his liberal views, Dobie became outraged; leading to a statement by Governor Stevenson that Dobie should likewise be dismissed. After his dismissal, Dobie published another series of books and anthologies about the open range. On 9/14/1964, President Lyndon Johnson, a long-time political rival of Stevenson, awarded him the Medal of Freedom. Dobie died four days later.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._Frank_Dobie

Marc Simmons, in his column *Trail Dust*, wrote:

I happened upon some notes I had taken down many years ago concerning J. Frank Dobie, that irrepressible Texas raconteur and folklorist. The notes came from a conversation with legendary New Mexico bookman Jack Rittenhouse, who had an insider's story on many of the Southwest's 20th-century writers.

*J. Frank Dobie was an outspoken defender of the quality of Southwestern literature. According to Jack, Dobie in the 1930s wanted to teach a new course at the University of Texas titled *Literature of the Southwest*. However, prompted by objections from the English Department, which questioned whether much true literature existed in the region, the school administration hesitated.*

*To resolve the matter, Dobie added the word *Life* at the beginning of the class name to read now, *Life and Literature of the Southwest*.*

*He thought the change made the title more acceptable because, as he proclaimed, "There's plenty of life in the Southwest." Further, the controversial word *Literature* became de-emphasized by its placement in the title's interior.*

The powers that be accepted the compromise and Dobie's course became hugely popular. His class bibliography, a handout containing brief and enticing notes for each entry, was published as a book in 1943 to wide acclaim.

Dobie's experience got me to thinking about the scope and definition of "Southwestern Literature," a field that I have long found fascinating. The first meaning of the word literature is "writing recognized as having permanent value based upon its intrinsic excellence."

That is not what ranch-raised Mr. Dobie had in mind. He leaned heavily toward a second definition, as "the entire body of writings of a specific language, period or people." Casting such a wide net allowed an author to go where he pleased, without fearing what highbrow literary critics and university professors thought.

Lawrence Clark Powell listed a single Texas author [in his 1974 book], J. Frank Dobie. Powell was a dedicated fan of Dobie and his books, ennobling him with a title, the "Laureate of Southwestern Writers."

I fortunately knew both Frank Dobie and Larry Powell. The knowledge and inspiration from them greatly influenced my career as a Southwest historian.

"Southwestern writers cast wide literary net on region", The New Mexican, 11/17/2012, Page A-8 [The rest of this article appears above under Larry Powell.]

Soon after I had published *The Man Who Owned Too Much*, the Texas historian Walter Webb visited Houston. George Fuermann and I went up to see him at his hotel. I took along a copy of my book. I found him senatorial in his bearing but affable. He encouraged me to continue printing these small books.

Frank Wardlaw was the only one I met frequently and socially. I met Dobie and Webb only for a talk one of them delivered, although I had first met Dobie in Jake Zeitlin's bookshop in Los Angeles. It was through George that I met Wardlaw. Frank Wardlaw came to Texas, at the same time as I, to head the University of Texas Press.

The New York Times obituary wrote in 6/30/1989:

Frank H. Wardlaw, who established scholarly publishing houses at the University of Texas, Texas A & M University and the University of South Carolina, died here Monday. He was 75 years old. During a 33-year publishing career, he oversaw the printing of over 700 books.

Mr. Wardlaw established the University of South Carolina Press in 1945. He was founding director of the University of Texas Press, where he worked for 24 years before working at Texas A & M from 1974 to 1978

www.nytimes.com/1989/06/30/obituaries/frank-h-wardlaw-publisher-75.html

Around 10/1960, I drove to El Paso and Las Cruces on a weekend trip to attend a meeting of the *Historical Society of New Mexico*. I met old friends Dr. Lawrence Clark Powell and Carl Hertzog, and made many new friends such as Bill Wallace, librarian at New Mexico Highlands University (Las Vegas, New Mexico).

Libraries

During the 1950s, I became a member of the American Institute of Graphic Arts. This was not difficult. I got a recommendation from a member, which Ward Ritchie gladly provided, and paid my dues. I maintained my membership only a few years, for unless I lived in New York my membership benefits came only from the publications.

Some of the greatest benefits I found in Houston were the libraries. For a few dollars a year, I joined the Friends of the Fondren Library at Rice Institute, later Rice University, and this let me to use the library, including borrowing many types of books.

I worked at the Houston Public Library (HPL), which had a fine Texas room. One of the best aspects of the HPL was its [stellar] photo reproduction service, which I have never found equaled in any other library, not even at the National Archives nor the Library of Congress. It was so simple because of the oil field activity in south Texas.

There were some of the best blueprint and map copying services available in Houston. HPL put one of the best of these firms under a bond big enough to cover the value of any rare materials as few printed items could not be replaced for \$20,000 [in 1960].

They made a ten-cent copy by Xerox, a reduced microfiche, an enlarged full color print, and same-size black and white copies in any degree of quality. They could convert a reel of microfilm within minutes into a set of sheets for a book. A library patron filled out an order form, selected the degree of quality desired, paid the cost, and came back to pick up the print. All services were rarely more than a day [turnaround].

I tried in vain at the National Archives to get a same-size line negative, seventeen by twenty-two inches, from a printed map. Their maximum was eight by ten inches, and they had only one quality: average!

New Mexico Bibliography

On 1954 and 1955 vacations to New Mexico, we decided that of all the places in the West, we personally preferred New Mexico. Sometime, someday, we would move there. I began my New Mexico collection. [As I had with Texas,] I started to compile a New Mexico bibliography of any book or pamphlet about New Mexico and published since 1800. Over a weekend, I listed 200 books. Within a fortnight, it was up to 500. Before the month was out, it passed 1000 entries. At first, it guided my [future] collecting, but I initially saw some possibility of publishing it [as a Bibliography].

I worked seriously on this bibliography by copying hundreds of entries from the great Library of Congress Catalog. Within five years, it passed the 3000 entry mark. The task was too big and that the chance of publishing a multivolume annotated bibliography was poor. Yet, I maintained the file on 4 by 6 cards and [regularly] added to it.

Research Binges

For many years, I had an odd habit of going off on a jag of research or writing. For any reason or for no reason, I took a fancy to a subject and worked feverishly for a time. This happened when I became interested in New Mexico newspapers [described next].

I stood for hours at a reference table in the Rice library, working out of their union lists of serials and from other directories. The librarian asked if I wanted to work at a desk, but I worked better standing. In my office, I built a worktable three and a half feet high by using pipefittings, lengths of pipe, and a plain flat door [as the desktop].

On a binge, I worked evenings in the library, then at home until late, and arose at five in to do more before starting my regular workday. This sometimes resulted in a magazine article. It ended when I exhausted the subject as far as my own interest dictated.

Like a mental "high", I found the chase exhilarating. These periods coincided when the barometric pressure rose. I never thought of this as work, but as great intellectual stimulus. Petty distractions fell away, boredom vanished, and I worked with a fierce intensity. Such a ten-day period left me feeling as refreshed as from a vacation.

New Mexico Newspapers

I worked in various union lists and old newspaper directories to compile a list of New Mexico newspapers. I saw no special need for this. It was just something I wanted to do.

On travels through New Mexico, I usually bought a newspaper in every town to build a collection of one copy of each different newspaper. Often in old print shops, I found copies of long-dead newspapers.

On a visit to the newspaper office in Silver City, the publisher kept a box of newspapers published in his area during 1880-95. I could not buy or borrow these, but the editor allowed me the use of his photographer's room. I had my 4 by 5 Crown Graphic camera with me, so I photographed these.

I collected 150 different newspapers, which now resides at the Eastern New Mexico University library, including correspondence I had with some editors reviewing the history of their papers.

Up to that time, the only available list was an incomplete one by Wilma Loy Shelton at the University of New Mexico. I shared my research material to Porter Stratton to help him write *The Territorial Press of New Mexico* and still later to Pearce Grove when he compiled his book *New Mexico Newspapers*. My work contributed only two per cent to each book, but it was useful, so I never felt that I built sand castles in these frenetic sessions of research and writing.

CACHE HUNTING

In 1950, our family took a tent and camped out, on the east fork of the Carson River in Nevada near Markleeville. On my vacations, I hunted for locally printed booklets, for these are elusive and never get into the channels of the book trade.

We visited Genoa a small community once known as Mormon Station. A home had antiques for sale and the woman wrote a short history of the town for a newspaper, one column long. From the same type forms [of the newspaper], the printer made her a little pamphlet which she sold for fifty cents. I was not dealing in such things, but I bought two copies to take back to Los Angeles. I gave one to Gregg Layne at the Zamorano Club and kept the other. Years later, I saw this in a catalog at five dollars.

I searched for rare books in quantity but never again had the luck as I had with the Ryus' book [discussed next]. I found a small packet of county histories once and at another time found fourteen copies of a book on New Mexico folklore among the effects of the deceased author at an auction.

More than one bookseller repeated my experience. When I lived in Santa Fe, Glen Dawson came through from Los Angeles and bought a good stock of Kyle Crichton's *Law and Order, Ltd.*, from a Santa Fe bookshop right [under my nose] simply by asking if they had any quantity of books to sell. Simply, no one had ever before asked!

In 1969 on a family trailer-camping trip through the Northwest, we stopped in Stevensville, Montana, to visit an old church built by Father Ravalli. Inside the church entrance was a pamphlet of the church's history, mentioning Father de Smet, selling for thirty-five cents. I left money for a dozen and brought them along.

There were dry runs and fruitless searches. More than once, I went off in New Mexico to track down the printer of a pamphlet with no luck.

Ed Bartholomew [noted later] found a good stock of an item or two. He had a theory, saying, "*You know, those old printers had a reverence for the book. After all their work, they could not bear to see a book destroyed. If the customer did not pay his bill, the printer had to 'eat the job.'* He might throw away as waste paper some advertising handbills, but he never threw away a quantity of a book."

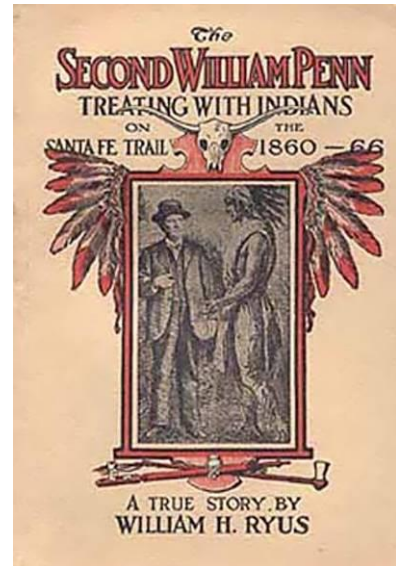
Therefore, there remain caches of books countrywide, treasure awaiting only an inquiry.

Cache of First Edition Ryus

Around 1954 on our first vacation to Santa Fe, I wandered into Candelario's former store on San Francisco Street. Recently sold and renamed as the Old Original Trading Post, [the new owner sold leftover stock.] On a table near the back were ten copies of the paperback William Ryus's *The Second William Penn: Treating with Indians on The Santa Fe Trail 1860-1866*, published in Kansas City in 1913.

The store priced them at a dollar each. When one finds one old book, a low price is no indication, but a pile of ten mint copies indicates a possible [hidden hoard]. I asked and told they had many, so I bought one and read it that evening at the motel. I did not know the book and had no bibliographies with me, but it looked like a first printing of personal memoirs of the Santa Fe Trail.

The next day I dickered on a wholesale price, buying three hundred copies for a hundred dollars. When we entered the storage room, crates of pottery concealed these books and only now revealed them. There were shelves of this book, 2300 copies in all, still wrapped in brown paper in bundles of ten and sealed with the printed sealing tape of Riley Company, printers. I layered the three hundred across the rear deck in my station wagon.



(manybooks.net)

I suppose that Ryus [born 1839] paid for a press run of 3000 copies, of which 500 were bound in decorated cloth, for I saw such an edition, and then sold two hundred paperbacks before something, possibly his death, stopped the sale.

Back in Houston, Howes and other places said it was a book of some importance and sold at auction for as high as fifteen dollars [in 1954]. I called Ed Bartholomew and Bill Morrison and offered them each fifty copies at fifty dollars. This recovered my hundred dollars instantly and left me with two hundred copies.

I sent my remaining paperbacks to a bindery to bind in red cloth, with the original wrappers bound in. I sent circulars to libraries, which preferred cloth-bound copies, offering the book at five dollars each. That edition of 200 soon sold out.

Copies of the book were soon everywhere, as other dealers discovered the remaining cache of 2000. The market value dropped, soon recovered, and climbed steadily. In late 1976, I found a dealer in Santa Fe with fifty copies in stock and I bought the entire lot. I never again made such a find although I had some luck with smaller lots.

The LaGrange Cache

While in Texas, I examined a copy of Lotto's *History of LaGrange County*, which said in the front that it was published in Schulenberg, Texas. I drove to Schulenberg and tried to find the printer. I mostly hunted for old-fashioned type. No printer recalled the book and there was no available type.

I noticed in the back of the book a line in fine print saying that LaGrange Steam Press did the presswork. I drove to LaGrange finding at least two print shops. The last one I visited admitted that long ago they were known as the LaGrange Steam Press.

“Did they publish Lotto's book early in this century?” Yes.

“Did they still have copies?” Yes.

“How much?” Five dollars.

“Can a dealer get a reduction, three for ten dollars?” Yes.

I bought three.

Back in Houston, I called three dealers and sold them a copy each for ten dollars. The general market price then was twenty dollars each, but I did not deal in Texana then and preferred to pass along the wealth. Each time I drove through LaGrange I bought ten dollars' worth of these books and sold them for thirty. Finally, I bought the last damp-stained books from off the floor

Lost Spanish Manuscripts in a Shed

The most curious of all [my cache hunting] encounters ended in frustration and failure. It must have been 1954 or 1955 on a vacation through New Mexico. We stopped to get a cold soda in a store in the little town of Watrous, just east of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

The building was an old stone store, L-shaped, with a residence across the back wing. The other two sides were walled or fenced to make a square with a shed along one side the enclosure as a wagon yard. It obviously dated from 19th century when Watrous was on the Santa Fe Trail.

The new owner converted it into a tourist attraction by making the shop resemble an old-time general store. There were a few bits of merchandise such as sold two generations ago but still available from the makers.

He filled the rest of his display cases with old Sears, Roebuck catalogs to add flavor. I examined these when the storekeeper asked about my interest.

I asked if he had old books.

“Not books, just some old papers”, he replied.

“What kind of papers?” I asked.

[He drawled,] “I don’t rightly know. They are just single sheets, mostly, and they are in a language I can’t read. Most of ‘em aren’t printed anyway, they are just written by hand. And some aren’t even on paper but on what looks like some kind of skin.”

Drooling [at the thought], I asked if I could see them.

[Playing me for all it was worth, he shrugged,] “Don’t know just where they are now, somewhere out in back. Too much trouble to dig ‘em out now. May not even be there anymore, ‘cause the kids like to play with them. Some of them have pretty ribbons on them put on with some kind of wax.”

I could visualize a pile of [rare] Spanish era manuscripts of great value.

No matter how I pleaded, he would not bring them out. Neither was I in a position to lay a hundred dollar bill on the counter to change his mind. I simply filed the memory away.

In passing years, I asked others and learned that many had heard the same story:

- Bill Wallace, then librarian at nearby New Mexico Highlands University
- Dale Giese, history professor at Western New Mexico University but previously historian at nearby Fort Union
- Bob Kadlec, an antiquarian bookseller in Santa Fe

Each heard this tale and tried unsuccessfully to find out whether the storekeeper was telling the truth or just having fun with the tourists.

The closest [backstory to] truth was that a history professor, temporarily not on any faculty and with a poor reputation for unscholarly proclivities toward other people’s books, had impressed the storekeeper to see the material and took a good batch along ‘to have it appraised’. The storekeeper never saw him or the papers again. This might be why he refused to show what he retained.

If you want to try your hand, the building is still there in Watrous, the westernmost store on the town’s small business section.

LESSONS IN BOOK TRADE

The month I arrived in Houston an old stationery store downtown closed with remaining books priced [to move]. I had just started to learn about the Western book trade.

There was a shelf and a half of Willman Connelley's *Doniphan's Expedition*. I did not realize its importance, so I bought only one copy for a dollar. I should have bought them all. [I falsely reasoned] that if this store offered so many at only a dollar, it was not worth much. When I found its true worth, the store was empty. This [hard-won] lesson had its reward three years later with a book found at Candelario's in Santa Fe.

Successful dealers in antiquarian books have a wide knowledge. Books come to them unpriced for the [original price] on the jacket flap no longer means anything for an out-of-print book. The current price may be fifty cents or fifty dollars.

It is an axiom that a person somewhere wants a specific book. However, telling a million people that you have that one book make the sale impossible except by [sheer] chance.

One aspect of the rare book business is the manner in which the booksellers learn from each other. These dealers educated each other, just as do owners of private presses.

Except for those with a high degree of success and become less approachable, they are always willing to talk about how they find books, how they establish prices, how they sell the books, and how they tell one rarity from another. Naturally, they guard their lists of good customers, but I knew medium-sized dealers who exchanged partial mailing lists, a hundred names at a time, and continued as long as each dealer felt he gained good names.

Occasionally a bookman stopped by Houston: Nick Kovach and Glen Dawson coming through from Los Angeles and Jerry Nedwick from Chicago. Usually I had something to sell although they were not always in search of stock. I traded away a set of old company records of a mining company gleaned from a shack on the Mojave (by permission of the owner), and a short run of *Nile's Register*.

I learned about "checkbook collectors." Anyone with ample income can buy books, as they would buy paintings or antique furniture. They know little about the content of what they buy. I do not downgrade such collectors since most rare book dealers would find life difficult without them. These erstwhile collectors gather and preserve material that might otherwise be lost forever. Many end up becoming interested in the actual content of the purchased material, which enriches both their house and minds.

In [the 1950s], books were not yet the status symbol as of paintings. A museum hangs a painting prominently for many visitors. A single book may cost more than a painting, but remains hidden inside a glass-fronted bookcase. This changed after I left Houston in 1962, [given the current] growing interest in book collections.

Key Bibliographies for Bookmen

I gathered a better collection of Southwestern books with key bibliographies to guide me.

I missed getting the first 1954 printing of Wright Howes' *US-IANA*, which soon went out of print. I visited the Chicago north side where Howes lived and looked at his stock. He said that it got harder to find Western material such that he considered anything as desirable if it was only twenty-five years old! His previous limit was usually fifty years. When I asked him if he had copies of [his own] *US-IANA*, there was none available.

However, he added, “*I sold three copies to a bookseller named Rosengren, over in San Antonio. I bet he still has one.*”

When I returned to Houston, columnist George Feuerman [noted later] prepared to visit San Antonio and I asked him to check the Rosengren shop. He came back with a copy for me and said there were only two available, of which he bought the other for himself.

Kurt Zimmerman wrote in 2013 (extract):

Wright Howes (1882-1978), a highly regarded Chicago bookseller, was best remembered for his fundamental bibliography on Americana, U.S.-IANA. This bibliography of uncommon and rare Americana was enhanced by concise and witty annotations. He was an acknowledged master.

Published in 1954, Howes considered the first edition a work in progress. He labored diligently on a definitive second edition that appeared in 1962. Both editions quickly sold. Both editions remain essential for any book person.

- www.bookcollectinghistory.com

[For a history, see article in 4/2012 issue of the *Journal of the Caxton Club* of Chicago - www.caxtonclub.org/reading/2012/apr12.pdf]

U.S.-IANA (1700-1950)



A descriptive check-list
of 11,450 printed sources
relating to those parts of
Continental North America
now comprising
the United States.

★
SELECTED BY WRIGHT HOWES

New York
R.R. BOWKER COMPANY
1954

U.S.IANA - 1954

I got a copy of Henry Wagner's *The Plains and the Rockies* as a reprint by Long's College Book Company.

Without Howes and Wagner, no collector or dealer can [viably] work in Western books.

Texas Rare-Book Market

People often asked for my opinion of the book market in Texas. I would not have condemned Texas as an illiterate state. However, before the 1960s it was not generally a book-loving community. It was hard to evaluate a state whose population was scattered. There were as many bookshops in all of Texas as there were in Los Angeles with an equal population, but their scattered locations made it seem as though these were few.

Young technicians flocking to Houston oil refineries and petrochemical plants were not book collectors. Even Herbert Fletcher moved away. There was not a major rare-book shop in Houston for years. [In 1981,] one does better in Austin, San Antonio, or Dallas.

There was always some energetic young dealer handling rare books in the state. Price Daniel, Jr., son of a former governor and United States senator, had a shop in Waco while he attended Baylor University. He later ran a shop there with good success, before he closed it and followed his father into state politics. His wife killed him on 1/19/1981.

Up in Dallas, Elizabeth McMurray ran a new-book store downtown with a fine stock. In the stockroom, a wall of shelves held out-of-print material where one could often find good items before the shop became part of the Doubleday operation.

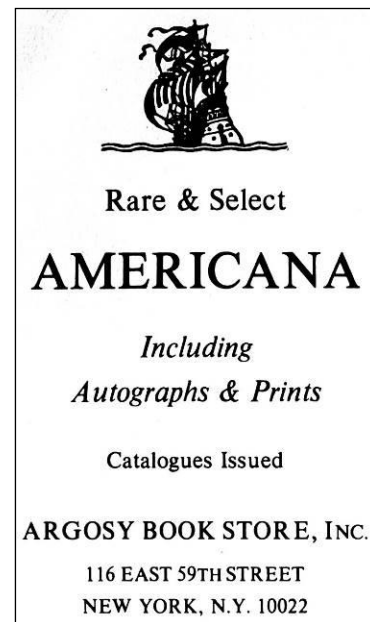
Bill Morrison started a good shop in Waco. Sawnie Aidredge had a house full of old books at his Dallas shop. There were good shops in San Antonio.

New York was still the core of the industry [in the 1950s]. There were the Eberstadt brothers, Peter Decker, Argosy, and others, including Dauber and Pine.

There were good shops in Cincinnati, Saint Louis, and Chicago. Slowly these shops declined and the antiquarian book trade moved toward the Southwest. It would be difficult to pinpoint the reasons without a careful, long analysis. Some contributing factors were the decline in available Americana, the increase in store rent, and the upsurge of interest among people living in the West itself.

Bookshops in the West differ greatly from those in the East. In the East, people go to new-book stores for new books and to rare-book stores for older books.

In the West, there is much interest in the history of the [nearby] land. The East considered a book on the Sioux, archaeology, or mineralogy as a technical work and seldom seen in a new bookstore, but [these topics were] general trade books in the West.



For example, if I asked for books about New Mexico:

- Los Angeles or Denver [carried a full] shelf on works about the state.
- Oklahoma City or Kansas City had a shelf for several Southwestern states.
- Chicago, Cincinnati, or Toledo labeled the shelf as Western Americana.
- When I went into Brentano's on Fifth Avenue in 1960, I could not find even a shelf labeled Americana. They had only a wall of general non-fiction.

In the West, rare-book dealers such as Holmes in Oakland, Dawsons in Los Angeles, the Guidon Bookshop in Scottsdale, or Rosenstock's in Denver, would mingle new books with out of print books, because buyers wanted both kinds of books [by subject].

"Interview with a Bookman," by David Farmer. Unpublished transcript, 1989.

That is typical of my business here. You may be the only person who comes in the house all week [and then the phone rings!]. There is no particular local business. Apply that ratio of so many per thousand the size [of Albuquerque] and there is not enough to support a Western Americana bookstore. Even Fred Rosenstock, as big as [Denver] is, said 85 per cent of people who came into his store did not know what he carried.

They would ask, "Do you carry Dr. Spock" or "Where are your cook books?"

He would say, "I'm just a Western Americana store."

They would reply, "Oh.", look around a little, and then go out.

The East did not integrate their shops. Argosy in New York or Godspeed's in Boston would not handle my Stagecoach Press books because they were new books. I had a real problem at Scribner's new-book shop on Fifth Avenue, in New York City.

The buyer looked at my books and said, "These are Americana items, take them to our Americana store in the office building across the street"

However, the Americana store said the first store must handle new books, so Scribner's never handled my Stagecoach Press books!

After 1950, the traditional rare-book store began to disappear. Many large cities had a "book row" of old shops. Specialists in one or two major fields operating out of their homes plus minor side interests slowly replaced the old shops.

A professor once said that he acquired old books with two items of good interest because of age: *El Gringo* by W. Davis, a New Mexico item; and *1465 Days in the Confederate Army*, a Texas item. I told him the Davis book retailed for up to twenty dollars but that the Confederate book might be a wholly different story. He sent it to me. I called Lindley Eberstadt in New York and sold the book over the phone for a few hundred

dollars, taking a share as my commission. As with many books, even fifteen years later [in 1981], I asked a price in four figures. That is true of most rare books sold today.

The Western Americana market moved to Texas and California. The [prior Western Americana] stock of three great dealers: Lowdermilk in Washington, O’Leary’s in Philadelphia, and Eberstadt in New York, all went to the Jenkins Company in Austin.

The total number of out-of-print books has [minimally] diminished but their channels of distribution became reorganized. Dealer after dealer in the West reported that it barely pays to make a buying trip east of the Mississippi anymore.

Peter Decker closed his shop. Argosy kept their Western Americana floor open on short hours with sparse stock. Dauber and Pine reported that they instantly sold to standing orders what little Western Americana they obtained and rarely put it on an open shelf.

Types of Out-of-Print Dealers

Over the years, I grasped the unwritten code of out-of-print dealer-buyers. Every Out of Print (O.P.) shop usually has choice stock tucked away, a few good books, some high priced items, and a quantity of some item he can sell at a good price.

Compare these extremes (no names, for they are still in business). If you were an O.P. shop, to which colleague would you offer such choice items; Dealer X or Dealer Y?

- Dealer-Buyer X comes in on a buying trip. He examines each book, asks if there is a courtesy discount to fellow dealers (usually 10% to 20%), and then haggles over the price of each book, this one is much too high, that one is high for its condition, etc. After a couple of hours of bargaining, he adds the total and asks if it can be rounded off to a slightly lower figure. Then he asks if the books can be shipped without offering to pay postage, and asks to be billed. He takes up to six months to pay. He has driven a sharp bargain, but he outfoxed himself, as he will never know what choice items were never offered.
- Dealer-Buyer Y comes in and takes up no time after the initial greeting and exchange of trade gossip. He checks the stock, not asking for a discount, and piles up the books he wants. He pulls out his billfold and offers to pay in full, in cash, offering to take the books out to his car or to pay the shipping. Usually the seller agrees to pay postage; there may be a split of that amount. The seller nearly always volunteers a discount and may even offer to take a lower, rounded off sum. There is no trouble, no wait, and no haggling.
- The best of all is seldom seen Dealer-Buyer Z, and there are such bookmen who has dealt with you before and knows that while you may be a bit high on some items you may be a bit low on others. He does not check prices. He moves swiftly, pulling books from the shelves and piling them on the floor or table as he goes. He says, "*Please ship these with a bill*" and leaves. His payment will be prompt. If you take advantage of him and let a defective item slip through, he may never come back. Long live Dealer-Buyer Z. May his tribe increase! He alone can make a fast buying trip and pick up [sufficient] stock from many stores [speedily, thus] making his [expensive] trip profitable.

In Texas, a man's word was his bond in the years that I lived there. A handshake was better than a contract in those days.

Houston Ramblings

This chapter gathers the random book-related events that occurred in Houston between the years 1951 and 1960, without dealing too extensively with material found in the *Advertising Years* or *Stagecoach Press* chapters.

It might appear that I was scattered in my life with no single purpose but moving as an opportunist, sending out shoots in all directions. This self-criticism is valid for the one who picks and sticks a mainstream has a better chance for [long-term] success.

In the beginning, I was fascinated with the idea of working in publishing, but it was not until I was in publishing that I saw that it did not quite have everything I wanted.

When I went into advertising agency work during the early years, I would have said, “*It is a career that I expect to follow all of my life*”.

I did not fully know about Western books until I moved back to California in 1944, and began to read *Desert* magazine and learn the lore of the West. This was reinforced more when I joined the Zamorano Club at age 37; and then even more yet after I built my Texas collection in Houston.

I often wondered what might have happened if I had gone in with Dauber and Pine, [the east coast] rare book dealers, when I was twenty-five.

Some followed the key of having a single purpose. When one does that, life builds an edifice by laying one brick on another.

- Fred Rosenstock dealt in rare Western Americana for fifty years
- the Grabhorns stuck to being fine printers in San Francisco
- Lawrence Powell remained a [University] librarian and general bookman
- Jake Zeitlin or Glen Dawson were booksellers [in Los Angeles]
- Jack Schaefer wrote only books about the West for thirty years

I felt like water trickling down a hill diverted this way and that by some obstacle but always moving in one general direction without [intending] to do so. Each sector of my life contributed more to the succeeding sector than might be apparent.

I left half-erected structures strewn across the landscape of my past. My pleasures have always outweighed my misgivings. Central to everything was my passionate interest in the literature of the West. I wanted to write it, read it, print it, sell it, collect it, evangelize upon it, talk about it, teach about it, study about it, and travel to all the places mentioned.