

COLLECTIONS



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Newark, Delaware

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Charcoal field sketch by Joseph Wolf for *A Monograph of the Phasianidae, or Family of Pheasants*, by Daniel Giraud Elliot, reproduced in the limited edition facsimile, *Joseph Wolf and the Golden Age of Natural History Illustration*, by David M. Lank.

A Bell Jar of Victorians: A Look at Animal Art and Artists in the Mid-Nineteenth Century

DAVID M. LANK

\$120,000; £1.5 million; \$75,000; \$6.3 million—these are not losses incurred on Black Monday by my clients. They are recent catalogue and auction prices for books, books which a few short years ago could have been purchased for a few hundred or a few thousand dollars. The books in question all deal with natural history subjects. Age is not the determining factor; many of them are from the nineteenth century and are filled with beautiful hand-colored plates. Our phenomenal interest in wildlife, the beauty—and increasing scarcity—of these books make them a ripe target for print dealers and interior decorators, who do not hesitate to buy the books, rip them apart, and sell the individual plates at a whopping profit.

The Victorian era was the Golden Age of animal art in books. Sumptuous monographs, often in giant format, were produced on everything from cats and dogs, salmon and snipe, to mice and marmots. With an extraordinarily high and consistent level of artistic talent, John Gould, Edward Lear, Joseph Wolf, John Keulemans, Joseph Smit, John Guille Millais and other fine artists turned out literally tens of thousands of portraits of animals and birds for the book market. These men were truly a “Bell Jar of Victorians.”

This paper is an edited version of a talk delivered at the 1988 Annual Dinner of the University of Delaware Library Associates on April 28, 1988.

More than a number of years, the Victorian Age was a spirit, an approach to life, an arbitrary classification of taste. As such, it started before the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837, and still seems to persist in some parts of the world, at least in isolated detail. Technologically and politically it was the best of times—if you were a member of the right class. The Industrial Revolution was in full swing, transportation was revolutionized, intellectual fermentation perfumed the air, and education expanded dramatically. But it was also the worst of times. There was terrible poverty which condemned thousands to the grim abuse depicted so vividly in the novels of Dickens and Thackeray. Despite foreign wars and massive emigration, England's population increased fourfold during the nineteenth century. In her crowded cities and in her stately homes set in private parklands, Victorian England was, above all, a society of contrasts. It was this society which spawned the great interest in natural history. But the term "natural history" had a very different meaning from what it does today, and that contemporary context is essential to understanding the fanatical Victorian interest in nature.

Serious natural historians were assumed to be men of independent means, and were paid or not paid accordingly. The botanist in charge of the herbarium at the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew was paid less than the clerk who handled the correspondence. Richard Owen, the leading anatomist of the day, earned £300 per annum, less than many bank clerks. In the first half of the nineteenth century, natural history was not part of any university degree course. Cambridge offered natural history as a degree course only starting in 1861. Other than that, only a few universities had professors, but lacking facilities, staff, and students, their role was mainly ornamental. King's College, London, sacked its Professor of Natural History in 1834 because no student had ever been known to attend his lectures. Apart from the British Museum and a handful of minor institutions, the only full-time chairs in

natural history were at six or seven English, Scottish, and Irish universities. Overwhelmingly, natural history was an amateur's idle.

There were some surprising inconsistencies. The same year that the Professor of Natural History was sacked in London for a total lack of students, Sir William Jardine began publishing a forty-volume encyclopedia, *The Naturalists' Library*, one of the most remarkably successful ventures in its field of all time. It went through at least six editions, which required tens of millions of hand-colored plates. By mid-century, books on natural history fed what had become a national obsession, and were only marginally less popular than the novels of Dickens. One quite undistinguished natural history book, *Common Objects of the Country*, by the Rev. J. G. Wood, sold 100,000 copies in a week.

The explanations for this interest were rationalizations for, rather than the roots of, the pursuit of natural history. The main cause was simple, but also unacceptable to the Victorian mind. It was, in short, boredom. There was nothing that the middle classes needed so badly as something to do. All the chores, including child-rearing, were taken over by servants, while the opportunities for social intercourse were limited by the strict bounds of social propriety. Huge chunks of the week were left totally unoccupied. Insignificant events rapidly turned into grand occasions. When the first chimpanzee was brought to the Zoo in 1836 all of London society rushed "to leave its cards" on the "little stranger." Or, as Theodore Hook put it in his poem in *Blackwood's Magazine*.

"The folks in town are nearly wild
To go and see the monkey-child."

The Rev. D. Landsborough felt he had a perfect solution for this crushing boredom. In his *A Popular History of British Seaweeds* he suggested that with the study of seaweeds "The Naturalist knows nothing of that taedium vitae—that vampire,

ennui, which renders life a burden to thousands. To him every hour is precious." And William Swainson, in his *Cyclopaedia of Natural History*, put it even more starkly: "The tediousness of a country life is proverbial."

However, even if boredom were the only reason for most people to study natural history, the pursuit could hardly be justified on these grounds. In order to be acceptable it either had to have an economic use or be morally uplifting. The economic use of sea anemones was limited, as it was for ferns and mosses. The Victorians overwhelmingly turned to religion as the rationale for their mania for the natural world, and not surprisingly a disproportionate number of authors were clergymen. By the mid-nineteenth century Rev. Landsborough had published on seaweeds, Rev. Houghton on fishes, Rev. Francis Orpen Morris on birds and butterflies. There was also the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—which lasted well into the 1900s. It produced *Our British Snails* by the Rev. J. W. Horsley, and *Floral Rambles in Highways and By-ways* by the Rev. Professor George Henslow. The texts showed a profound disregard for accuracy or science. And the Religious Tract Society put out a torrent of books that were, by our tastes, incredibly mawkish and profoundly silly, heavily laced with anthropomorphism and smothered in morality. Their *Book About Birds* was a typically vacuous effort which turned every bird into a sermon. The study of natural history was a spiritual exercise that enabled one to look "through Nature up to Nature's God," as Pope put it in his *Essay on Man*, and through which we could "find tongues in trees, books in running brooks, Sermons in Stones, and good in everything," as Shakespeare so wonderfully expressed it in *As You Like It*. Natural history was natural theology, and natural theology made the study of natural history not only respectable, but almost a pious duty . . . and there was nothing the Victorians liked more than a duty!

Natural theology gave thousands of amateur naturalists



Dactyloa Edwardsii, an Iguaniform green lizard called Venus or Green Guana, drawn by Philip Henry Gosse for his *A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1851).

an excuse to kill and pin butterflies and insects, shoot (to collect) anything that moved, and to uproot rare plants to their hearts' content. Even the London Zoo was founded largely on religious grounds. In 1829 the first formal announcement opened with the following sentence: "Zoology, which exhibits the nature and properties of animated beings, their analogies to each other, the wonderful delicacy of their structure, and the fitness of their organs to the peculiar purposes of their existence, must be regarded not only as an interesting and intellectual study, but as a most important branch of Natural Theology, teaching by the design and wonderful results of organization the wisdom and power of the Creator." And everybody loved the Zoo.

Some books combined ostentation with silliness to a delicious degree. Typical was *The Humming Bird Keepsake—A Book of Bird Beauty*. The cover was on false vellum, hand-

painted, and overlaid with a coat of varnish. The title page and the text were printed in gold. The illustrations are gaudy and contrived, pictorial versions, in fact, of the same ethos that filled those countless bell jars with twisted birds. In London, last month, I found each page being offered by a print dealer for \$100.

There was a mania for collecting for the sake of collecting, not for the sake of knowledge. Fraudulent dealers could always supply rare "finds," but the best items could be collected by yourself off in the countryside, and a trip out of the major centers during the middle years of the nineteenth century became easy, dependable, and cheap with a fivefold expansion of the railroad system. For the first time it became possible for large numbers of people to take themselves and their families on an annual holiday, by preference down to the seaside.

And it was at the seaside that natural history got its real spurt. Dr. Richard Russell in the 1750s had taken two volumes in Latin to claim that sea-bathing had a highly beneficial influence on the glands—assuming, of course, that the water penetrated through the layers of incredible bathing costumes. It was impossible, when by the sea, not to indulge in the gentle sport of beachcombing, if for no other reason, as Richard Ayrton wrote in 1813, than that "the pursuit of picking up shells and weeds every day is something to help on existence between breakfast and dinner."

There were equally fatuous field trips to the countryside as well. But it must be added, there were serious field trips, which tended to be the preserve of men. Ladies turned out in impossible clothing: flimsy shoes, precious hats, and voluminous skirts. One society included in its announcements the minimum width of the stiles through which crinolines had to pass during an outing.

The interest in natural history was largely confined to the urban, the educated, and the wealthy. Mole-catchers and

gamekeepers continued to extirpate their friends under the inherited, unshakable conviction that they were slaying the enemy. It is a testimonial to the recuperative powers of nature that there are any moles or birds of prey left in England today. Rural folk simply couldn't identify with the whimsical delight in oddity which is so exceptionally well developed in cultured Englishmen. Even famous men such as Lord Rothschild were not above using truly bizarre modes of transportation—a zebra team—to emphasize their commitment to natural history. Farmers tended, understandably, to furrow their brows over such urban eccentricity. But despite the mockery and verbal abuse, the field trip movement spread, and by the end of the 1800s the combined membership of all the natural history clubs totalled over 50,000.

Typically, these societies had four main features: debating, publishing, collecting, and research. These activities required space, printing costs, and if possible a curator to keep the stuffed specimens and the volumes arranged and dusted. All this took money, and money was raised from membership fees. Almost by necessity, membership—and therefore, leadership—was restricted to the wealthy. By the 1830s, however, the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club had moved its meetings outdoors, thereby positively discouraging activities such as renting, publishing, collecting, and amassing books. The membership fees were lowered, and field naturalists' activities came more into the orbit of the common man. What had been a small and rather dilettante coterie of aristocrats now became engulfed by a huge crowd of zealots.

If railroads and education broadened the scope for study, and naturalists' clubs gave the essential structure, there were at least three other events that had an incredible impact on the spread of interest in natural history. The first was the tremendous growth in the use of the compound microscope. During the 1830s and 1840s the quality, sturdiness, and power of microscopes increased dramatically, but the prices fell

fivefold. "Evenings at the Microscope" became a high society event as well as a pastime within reach of ordinary city folk.

The second event which revolutionized interest in the study of natural history was the accidental discovery in the 1830s by Nathaniel Bagshaw Ward that plants would flourish if they, along with moist earth, were sealed in a glass bottle. This concept was expanded into the Wardian Glass Case, which permitted countless Victorian ladies to have luxuriant displays of living plants, especially ferns, in their already overcrowded sitting rooms. The Wardian Glass Case also allowed the first practical transport of exotic plant species over long distances, permitting tea, rubber and pineapples to grow where they were not indigenous. Ward's invention only took off when, in the mid-1840s, the "temporary" excise tax on glass, which had been imposed during the time of Napoleon's rise to power, was removed. With the new low price, sheet glass was now available to the average citizen.

The third revolutionary development was the discovery of the basic principles of the aquarium, or as it was then called, the "aqua-vivarium." It was Robert Warington who first understood that the interaction of plant life and water produced and sustained a clean environment within which animal life could prosper. The widely popular naturalist, Philip Henry Gosse, came to the same realization working simultaneously but quite independently. For the first time, sea anemones, fish, and shells could live in containers whose water did not become "corrupted." Through the introduction of aquatic plants, water was able to sustain life with minimal care—a vast improvement over the tedious labor of daily changing the water in a goldfish bowl, or the expense of having fresh sea water delivered daily to your door. Suddenly, everyone had living displays. The very ostentatious even combined a Wardian Glass Case with an aquarium for a monumentally over-stated Victorian masterpiece.

Education, relative wealth, ease of travel, microscopes,

the Wardian Case, the aquarium and, above all, boredom conspired to send an entire nation rushing off madly in all directions to shoot, net, pin, and uproot everything in sight. British flora and fauna were victimized and mutilated, and in extreme cases entire species were destroyed. The countryside and to a large degree the seashore, whose natural riches had appeared to all observers comfortably inexhaustible—both intellectually and materially—were ravaged in the sacred name of natural history.

Obviously, at that time, the concept of conservation had little or no role to play in the natural history movement. Cruelty to animals was a part of daily life, but the turning point came half-way through the 1860s with the scale of destruction wrought by the latest fashion in women's hats, which involved the wearing of substantial portions of the plumage of wild birds. Among the hardest hit were exotics from abroad, but the use of gulls and kittiwakes wiped out whole breeding colonies along the coast. And in the United States, game wardens were shot protecting the last nesting sites of the egrets whose plumes were so eagerly sought after. Other animals were caught up in the murderous mania for natural adornment. Stuffed squirrels were a very popular item.

Two other common activities spelled doom for untold numbers of wild creatures. One was musical and one was gastronomic. To satisfy the craze for singing birds 70,000 linnets were taken per year for the London market alone, along with 70,000 goldfinches. The mortality rate was around 30 percent, so over 40,000 birds were automatically lost. At least eight other species were similarly decimated, along with 60,000 larks. Remember, these were singing birds.

For consumption, the slaughter was even more devastating. In the mid-1850s, 350,000 larks alone were sold in London, along with hundreds of thousands of thrushes and robins and other small birds for roasting. This slaughter made four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie pale by comparison.



Frontispiece from J. G. Wood's *Common Objects of the Country*, new ed. (London: George Routledge, 187-), printed in color by Edmund Evans.

Perhaps the cruelest trade of all was in sparrows. More than 10,000 per year were sold as playthings for children and idlers who would tie strings to their legs, and basically torture them until their very short life was exhausted. A side-industry among the street vendors was the traffic in birds' nests with their eggs as curiosities for collectors, and for the tasteful arrangements in Victorian bell jars. Far more murderous was the passion for egg collecting. Wholesale slaughter was committed on the nesting sites especially of sea birds. In fairness, most sea birds survived to lay again, and eggs were a renewable harvest. But not always. The rarest eggs were the most sought after. In 1844, the last two Great Auks and their eggs were collected off Iceland for a Danish nobleman, exterminating the species. The fight between natural history and protectionism was very important, because so many of the leading natural historians were first and foremost, sportsmen. Protectionism was seen as being anti-hunting, long the sacred preserve of the landed and the wealthy. Until the end of the nineteenth century, more natural history was learned through the sights of a gun than through any other instrument. Not unusual was John Guille Millais, a fine naturalist, a crack shot, and a more than passible animal artist. In such classics as *British Game Birds* the hunter, shooting scenes on the moors, ornithologically accurate portraits, close observations of habits and habitat, and descriptions of a morning's butchery all share the same cover. The dual role was considered normal.

But none of this was really natural history as we know it today. Until Charles Darwin came along, science had no real spokesman in the popular press. His *Origin of Species* opened the floodgates for serious scientific research and ushered in what was to become the Golden Age of natural history books. Starting in the late 1830s, growing during the 1840s and 1850s, the outpouring of great books on natural history swelled to a flood during the sixties, seventies, and eighties. Literally thousands of new species were being discovered, and the

collecting of the previous decades needed desperately to be systematized by serious scientists and artists. There was some ego involved, too: private collections or menageries could be immortalized between the covers of a grand book. John Edward Gray, of the British Museum, wrote the text, and Edward Lear painted the pictures of the collection at Knowsley Hall, published as *Gleanings From the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall* in 1846. The children of the Earl of Derby were constantly distracting Lear, so he wrote some nonsense rhymes for them. The famous author of the "Owl and the Pussycat" was England's leading wildlife painter, until bad health forced him to emigrate to Italy where, as an even more famous landscape artist, he painted hundreds of pictures and published numerous travel books. When Lear was only nineteen years old, he produced a monograph of the parrot family that still ranks as one of the greatest half-dozen bird books of all time.

Production of natural history books became an industry. Preeminent at the opening of the period was John Gould. Gould engaged the services of several of the finest artists of his generation, including Lear, to supply almost 3,000 lithographs for forty-one folio volumes dealing with specific families, and regional compendia based on bird skins that poured into his "bird factory" from all over the world. In the early books many of the birds were painted by Gould's wife, Elizabeth, whose premature death closed a career that would have been brilliant. Gould himself was an accomplished artist, but only a handful of paintings and drawings can be attributed to him. He was more a production and artistic manager than anything else. He often supplied sketches from which his artists completed the final paintings, which would then be transferred onto fine-grained lithographic limestone for printing and subsequent hand-coloring.

By far the greatest talent to work with Gould was Joseph Wolf. Wolf was born in Germany in 1820. When he was barely twenty years old—and having had no formal art training—he

was commissioned to paint the plates for Eduard Rüppell's *Birds of North Africa*. Another German ornithologist, Herman Schlegel, promptly hired the lad to supply plates for a giant folio on falconry. The first plate was of the Gyr Falcon on the gauntlet of a falconer. The sense of balance, the center of gravity, the fantastic foreshortening of the feather patterns, and the contrasting softness and stiffness of the downy and primary feathers have never been surpassed.

In 1848, Wolf emigrated to England, where he was immediately put to work on a major project for the British Museum, *The Genera of Birds*. The original artist was David Mitchell, who, because he had become too busy, turned the work over to the newcomer, adding in a "Postscript by the Illustrator" that "I was fortunate enough to obtain the assistance of Mr. Wolf of Coblenz; and have the pleasure of believing that . . . I have thus secured the best available talent in Europe as a substitute for my own pencil." Wolf's main contribution was a series of uncolored generic plates, each showing details of heads, feet, and feathers. These are basically architectural renderings in strict scientific profile, but nevertheless, the sense of animation and the precision of the draftsmanship are stunning. There had never been bird portraiture of this quality before.

The work for *The Genera of Birds* led to commissions from John Gould, for whom he supplied at least fifty-five plates for *The Birds of Great Britain*. Wolf's work for Gould was spectacular, and from various sources it is safe to assume that Gould supplied no sketches for Wolf. Rather, it is clear that Wolf's approach fundamentally influenced all subsequent work by Gould's other artists. But to appreciate Wolf more fully, it is essential to look at the work he did for two other patrons, the London Zoological Society and the American naturalist, Daniel Giraud Elliot.

In 1852, the Zoological Society decided to commission a series of watercolors to document some of their more in-

teresting tenants. The council considered themselves "fortunate to secure the services of Mr. Joseph Wolf, who may be fairly said to stand alone in intimate knowledge of the habits and forms of Mammals and Birds." One hundred of these watercolors appeared as hand-colored lithographs in a two-volume folio, *Zoological Sketches*. He could paint all members of the animal kingdom with equal facility, whether they were black-necked swans or elephants drinking at a moonlit pool. All animals were deemed worthy of serious art and serious science. Sir Edwin Landseer called him "without doubt the best all-round animal painter that ever lived." Archibald Thorburn called his art "faultless." Art and science were at last reconciled. No longer would artists be allowed to copy faithfully the distortions of the bird-stuffer.

An extraordinary American naturalist, Daniel Giraud Elliot, recognized this talent. For Elliot, Wolf would supply the paintings for the three greatest natural history monographs of the Victorian Era: the *Pheasants*, *Birds of Paradise*, and the *Cats*. A passable artist in his own right, Elliot had already produced an important monograph on the family of the ant-thrushes for which he had supplied most of the artwork himself. Elliot hired Wolf to finish most of the plates for a folio he was completing on the birds of North America not recorded by Audubon. Thus began a cooperation that would last for years.

What really set Wolf apart was his ability to draw live birds. As Wolf said, "some ornithologists don't recognize nature—don't know a bird when they see it flying. A specimen must be well-dried before they recognize it." Most previous artists had relied on these same dried skins for their models. Wolf also understood that great art starts with great drawings: "Outline is the most difficult thing that any artist has to conquer." Nowhere is outline more important than in the field sketch. For this reason above all others, the sketch is the purest form of art. Ironically, today we are obsessed with microscopic

detail, and equate every feather, every hair, with excellence. Sir Edwin Landseer bluntly told an art class that they would never paint a decent picture until their eyesight had begun to fail. And Wolf, at age seventy-five, claimed rightly that he could paint a better picture than he could at age forty. "I saw too much then," he explained.

The artwork for the *Pheasants* started with sketches, followed by full preliminary wash drawings and then watercolor paintings. The watercolors and wash drawings do exist, but it is the sketches that are the most thrilling artistically. For the *Pheasants*, Wolf's watercolors and the sketches were transferred onto lithographic stones by two other artists, Joseph Smit and John Keulemans. These were printed and then hand-colored under the supervision of an enigmatic Mr. White, about whom we know almost nothing. The finished plates in the *Pheasants*, *Birds of Paradise*, and *Cats* remain among the greatest zoological portraits of all time. Their beauty and their rarity may have condemned the books to extinction. Probably fewer than fifty copies of the folios remain intact.

The two artists who translated Wolf's paintings onto the printing surface went on to establish great careers for themselves. Smit, like Wolf, was of German extraction; Keulemans was a Dutchman. All three got their start in the Dutch town of Leyden, and all three emigrated to England. Smit was born in 1836, and he was over ninety when he died. In addition to the work he did for Wolf, he published hundreds of his own paintings for numerous books, the best of which were found in Rev. Henry Baker Tristram's *Survey of Western Palestine*, and George Rowley's *Ornithological Miscellany*. He painted small rodents, antelopes and buffalo for a series of major books, and the quality of the art earned him the reputation of being the best animal painter after Wolf's death. He became the principal artist for the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*, for which he supplied scores of plates both of mammals and birds. So close to Wolf's style had Smit evolved that Wolf's Dead Sea

Sparrow from the *Proceedings* twenty years later miraculously appeared, in reverse, in Tristram's *Western Palestine*.

The other artist who translated Wolf's work was John Keulemans. From the 1860s through the 1890s, virtually every leading scientist sought the hand-colored lithographs of this largely forgotten genius to illustrate their books. Keulemans's first work was a Dutch book titled *Onze vogels in huis en tuin*. He was personally responsible for the hand-coloring of the 200 lithographic plates. His second book, and the only other one that he both wrote and illustrated, was the *Natural History of Cage Birds*, which was never completed because of the tremendous demand by others for his work.

Keulemans's output was prodigious—during a career that spanned half a century, he made over 30,000 sketches and more than 2,000 full portraits. None was more breath-taking than the thirty-four plates for Henry Eeles Dresser's *Monograph of the "Meropidae," or Family of the Bee-Eaters* and twenty-seven plates for the *Monograph on the "Coraciidae," or Family of the Rollers*. There were also books on *The Birds of New Zealand*, and even local avifauna such as *The Birds of Sussex*. For Dresser he supplied 678 plates for the nine-volume large quarto edition of *A History of the Birds of Europe*, published between 1871 and 1896.

Gould, Lear, Millais, Elliot, Wolf, Smit, and Keulemans were not alone. A surprising number of other largely forgotten artists also produced remarkable books. Charles Cory from Boston was the author and artist for *The Birds of Haiti and San Domingo*; Edward Neale did the plates for Booth's *Rough Notes on Twenty-odd Years of Shooting*; Philip Henry Gosse, remembered mainly as a zoologist, did his own plates for *The Birds of Jamaica*; Claude Wyatt did the paintings for R. Bowdler Sharpe's great *Monograph of the "Hirundinidae" or Family of Swallows*, the hand-coloring for which was done by Sharpe's daughters; B. Waterhouse Hawkins painted the ungulates at Knowsley Hall for the Early of Derby's private

menagerie. All these excellent artists were part of the great tradition of Victorian animal art.

In 1885, Lord Lilford began publication of the *Coloured Figures of the Birds of the British Islands*. This seven-volume compendium included sixty-one hand-colored lithographs by Keulemans, but it was also the first to make successful use of the newly perfected technology of chromolithography to reproduce the paintings of a talented newcomer, Archibald Thorburn. With the advent of Thorburn, the Victorian Age of animal art effectively ceased to exist. Keulemans supplied plates into the early years of the twentieth century, but Thorburn, and a raft of new artists—Henrik Gronvold, George Lodge, Albert Seaby, Winifred Austen, Dorothy Medland, Charles Tunnicliffe, Chloe Talbot-Kelly, Sir Peter Scott—all began exploring new avenues of artistic expression. But there were no new great books.

The Victorians collected, worshipped, painted, and investigated. But collections, theology, art, and science were not enough to satisfy the Victorian psyche. Ostentation was as important as intellectualism. In a passage of a treatise on taxidermy published in 1840, William Swainson remarked: "In nothing has the growing taste for natural history so much manifested itself as in the prevalent fashion of placing glass cases of beautiful birds and splendid insects on the mantelpiece or the side-table."

The Victorian craze for animals is perpetuated in the image of the bell jar. But long after the stuffed inhabitants have reverted to dust the beautiful art of Lear, Gould, Wolf, Smit, Keulemans and their contemporaries will live on in the pages of the great books. The genius of these men—our "Bell Jar of Victorians"—is the true legacy.

LECTURE

Thur. Eve'g. Aug. 25, '21
Odd Fellows Hall, Smyrna, Del.

GIVEN BY THE
Mount Zion, A. M. E. Church

= The Speakers Will Be =

CHAS. H. COULBURN
 NOTED AS A GREAT "RACE" MAN

Mrs. Alice-Dunbar-Nelson
 Who stands as one of the greatest Educators of the "RACE"

Mr. Robert Nelson
 A Prominent Man of Literary Fame

Rev. J. D. Bonds, Pastor of Mt. Joy Church
Wilmington, Del. - Master-of-Ceremony

These Men and Women are from WILMINGTON and represent the
 JEWELS of our "RACE" in the State of Delaware

HEAR THEM

Plenty of Refreshments
ORCHESTRA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF
 Dr. Geo. Coulburn, of Wilmington, Delaware

Admission, adults ; ; 35c
CHILDREN : : 25c

G. L. Polke, Print, Smyrna, Del.

J. C. Christy

Program for a 1921 appearance by Alice Dunbar-Nelson
 in Smyrna, Delaware.

"Two-Facing Life": The Duality of Alice Dunbar-Nelson

GLORIA T. HULL

Public speaking was one of the many, important ways that Alice Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935) achieved acclaim throughout her life.¹ She shared platforms with leaders such as James Weldon Johnson, Mary McLeod Bethune, and R. Russa Moton, president of Tuskegee Institute; headlined lecture series with the famous W. E. B. DuBois; and spoke extensively on behalf of women and black people at schools, churches, political rallies, backyard barbecues, suffragette meetings, club movement conventions, and so on. Always, she was applauded as an effective, even inspiring deliverer of her various messages. A promotional flyer hails her as a "Great Lecturer," while a California newspaper described one of her 1930 addresses as "easily a masterpiece in oratorical elegance and logic."² After her death, a columnist colleague admired her ability to rise at the spur of the moment and deliver little elocutionary gems which prompted both thought and pleasure.

Yet, despite this massive experience and positive feedback, Dunbar-Nelson could doubt her speaking talent. Writing in her diary one year after the Los Angeles lecture, she compares herself unfavorably to other speakers after listening to a minister's oration:

Now why can't I do that? Because I can't feel? But I do. Because I am cold? But I am not. . . . Too intellectual? Too cynical? Too scornful of bunk-hokum? Must be that. Now there's Nannie Burroughs, for instance, and Mrs. [Mary McLeod] Bethune. But I've got more brains than either—or have I? Probably not—if I had, I'd be where they are instead of wondering at 55 where in God's name I'm going to turn next?³

What is highlighted here—the discrepancy between Dunbar-Nelson's public appearance and private face—reveals more than a momentary slump in her self-confidence. It illustrates an ever-present dichotomy between the external view of her and the deeper, less-visible reality—a dichotomy which is the critical key to understanding her fascinating life and literary works.

In general, Alice Dunbar-Nelson has been regarded as a rather conventional, educated, middle-class black American woman of the early twentieth century who was something of a social activist and minor author. She was born 19 July 1875 in New Orleans, Louisiana, where she attended public school and graduated from Straight College (now Dillard University). After teaching school for four years, she journeyed north where she continued her education at Cornell, Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania while continuing to work in the schools in New York City and then, from 1902 to 1920, in Wilmington, Delaware. In 1895, she published her first book, *Violets and Other Tales*, which was followed in 1898 by another collection of stories entitled *The Goodness of St. Rocque*.

She married the celebrated dialect poet Paul Laurence Dunbar that same year, separated from him in 1902, and made another, more lasting union (1916-1935) with a widowed Pennsylvania newspaperman and politician, Robert J. Nelson. The mature Dunbar-Nelson organized women's rights campaigns, toured the South during World War I for the Council of National Defense, served on the State Republican Committee

of Delaware (1920), cofounded with other black clubwomen the Industrial School for homeless and delinquent girls in Marshalltown, Delaware (1920), headed anti-lynching crusades (1922-1930), directed national political drives among black women (1924), and served as executive secretary of the American Friends Inter-Racial Peace Committee (1928-1931).

In addition to her two early books, she edited *Masterpieces of Negro Eloquence* (1914) and *The Dunbar Speaker and Entertainer* (1920); published numerous articles and essays in magazines such as the *Messenger* and the *Journal of Negro History*; achieved recognition as a poet in outlets like *Crisis*, *Caroling Dusk*, *Opportunity*, *Negro Poets and Their Poems*, and *The Book of American Negro Poetry* (1917-31); produced syndicated newspaper columns for the *Pittsburgh Courier* (1926) and the *Washington Eagle* (1926-30); and wrote/directed a few plays. After her husband, Robert, received a 1932 appointment to the Pennsylvania Athletic Commission which finally provided them with a secure living, they moved to Philadelphia, where she died of heart trouble on 18 September 1935.

This biographical-literary record sufficed to earn Dunbar-Nelson honorable mentions in the annals of black history and literature. Her reputation has, paradoxically, been both aided and eclipsed by that of her more famous husband, Paul. And her authorial status has congealed as a turn-of-the-century local colorist who mined the Creole culture of New Orleans and later published a few politely-received poems during the creative ferment of the New Negro Renaissance of the 1920s. This is her visible, established, critical personae. Revolutionary developments in literary scholarship (for example, more liberating methodologies and canon reformation fostered by black and feminist studies) have mandated a scrutiny beyond such easy generalizations which has benefited lost, disenfranchised, and undervalued figures. When this new questing, questioning perspective is assisted by the

discovery of heretofore unknown or unexplored archival materials, it is even more successful. Nowhere is this fact more stunningly evident than in the case of Dunbar-Nelson.

During her life, this self- and history-conscious woman kept things—newspaper clippings about herself, programs on which she appeared, copies of what she wrote both published and unpublished, photographs of family and friends, important business and personal letters, greeting cards, playbills, dance tickets, telegrams, and so forth. The fact that she treasured these documents—even in the face of relative neglect by the world—indicates not only her orderly and ordering personality, but also a felt sense of her own worth and destiny. As she once said of her diary (which was often a burden for her to maintain): this is going to be valuable one of these days. A historian and librarian, Dunbar-Nelson's niece, Pauline A. Young, was equally committed to preserving the record. From the time of her aunt's death until 1984, when the University of Delaware Library acquired the papers, Miss Young moved them with her, worried about fire and theft, tried to protect them from crumbling, and allowed limited scholarly access to them.

Few early black female writers have been fortunate enough to have their remains so solicitously preserved. What Dunbar-Nelson left behind permits a modern reassessment of her work at a time when Afro-American women writers are beginning to be appreciated as never before. The woman who once dangled as Paul Laurence Dunbar's elegant, poetic appendage emerges as a strong, complex person with her own considerable literary legacy. She was a creditable romantic poet, an interesting—if uneven—writer of short fiction, an essayist and speech writer, a renowned journalist, and a marvelous diarist. An engaged, revisionist reading of the texts of her life and work brings into focus the duality between outside/inside, public/private, conventional/unconventional which characterized her being.



Alice Dunbar-Nelson in the early 1900s, while she and Paul Laurence Dunbar were living in Washington, D.C.

Inevitably, race was a particularly vexing issue. Alice herself was marked from the beginning by the mixed white, black, and Indian of her Creole ancestral strains. This mixture endowed her with reddish-blond baby curls which darkened to red then auburn, and a fair enough complexion to pass occasionally for white when she wanted to see an opera, swim at a bathing spa, or travel by train comfortably in the Jim Crow United States of her day. Given her ex-slave mother's black and Indian blood, she seems to have received quite a bit more Caucasian influence from her father, who was always cryptically referred to as a "seaman" or "merchant marine."

The details are shrouded in history, but there was something irregular, something shameful about her birth to which Alice alluded in a letter to Paul. Remonstrating with him

about "deriding" her and inflicting "bitterness and hurts," she wells up:

Dearest,—dearest—I hate to write this—How often, oh how pitifully often, when scarce meaning it, perhaps, you have thrust my parentage in my face. There!⁴

What there was to thrust in her face could have been white ancestry, illegitimacy, or perhaps a combination of the two. (Paul, very dark himself, was frequently referred to as a "full-blooded Negro.") However, nothing in her public carriage betrayed anything other than personal and racial pride.

Interestingly, some evidence suggests that Dunbar-Nelson privately preferred her mixed racial appearance and sometimes looked down upon darker-skinned blacks, especially if they were also less educated and refined. Skin color and status were often closely connected, and Dunbar-Nelson, though chronically short of funds, was undeniably patrician in her tastes and leanings. Personal ambivalence notwithstanding, she identified solidly with the race *sui generis* and politically, and fought for the rights of black people in a variety of individual and organizational ways. These ranged from the women's club movement, to the Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill, to financially aiding, from her own shallow pocket, young charges at the Industrial School for Colored Girls.

Yet, even this complex racial picture is complicated by an essay which Dunbar-Nelson wrote about 1929. Entitled "Brass Ankles Speaks," it is an outspoken denunciation of darker-skinned black people's prejudice against light-skinned blacks told by a "Brass Ankles," a black person "white enough to pass for white, but with a darker family background, a real love for the mother race, and no desire to be numbered among the white race."⁵ This "Brass Ankles" recalls her "miserable" childhood in "a far Southern city" where other schoolchildren taunted and plagued her because she was a "light nigger, with

straight hair!" This kind of rebuff and persecution continues into a northern college and her first teaching job:

Small wonder, then, that the few lighter persons in the community drew together; we were literally thrown upon each other, whether we liked or not. But when we began going about together and spending time in each other's society, a howl went up. We were organizing a "blue vein" society. We were mistresses of white men. We were Lesbians. We hated black folk and plotted against them. As a matter of fact, we had no other recourse but to cling together. (*Works*, 2:318)

And she states further, "To complain would be only to bring upon themselves another storm of abuse and fury." Thus, her whole life has been spent between the Scylla and Charybdis of intra- and inter-racial hell.

This clearly autobiographical essay was as close as Dunbar-Nelson ever got to articulating feelings about her own status as a "yaller nigger." It seems that she is saying here what she would not express in any other form. She sent the ten-page typescript signed "Adele Morris" to *Plain Talk* magazine. The editor, G. D. Eaton, replied on 4 April 1929:

Dear Miss Nelson:

I like this piece very much, but I don't want to run it anonymously. Yet I realize the danger to you if you put your name under the title.

Five days later, he wrote to say that he also objected to running it pseudonymously: "After all, your document is a personal one, and that is the more reason it should carry your own name." But of course, Dunbar-Nelson would never have consented to such public unmasking.

Her handling of race in her writings—as in her life—is characterized by the same surface clarity and muddy undertow. In the first place, there is an apparent split between the aracial nature of her belles-lettres and the overt racial concerns of her more expository writings. In her essays, speeches, and jour-

nalism, race is her theme, and her tone is problack and militant. In one 1926 run of her "Une Femme Dit" column, she discusses the current state of black theater, applauds the admission that juvenile courts are racially prejudiced, deplors the pseudoscientific approach to studying black people, praises the work being done to foster race pride and higher education by the black Greek sororities and fraternities, laughs at "upper ten" blacks who lie about not being born in the South, comments on a public figure denying that he is a Ku Klux Klan-sman, and explains America's love of black music. The comments in her column are racially sharp, often witty, wry and sarcastic:

The North Carolina Inter-Racial Committee has appointed a committee to investigate traveling conditions in the Jim Crow cars, and to insist upon better Jim Crow cars.

TO INSIST UPON BETTER JIM CROW CARS!

Can you beat it?

.

It is a healthy sign when Southern white women can look calmly at the curse of the South—mulattoes—and not blame black women for them.

.

Out in Watts, California, the citizenry object to Negroes owning and driving busses. They may patronize them, but own them never. Therefore the franchise of the bus line is revoked. A fine incentive for the Negro to "acquire property, thrift, and a steady position in the community."⁶

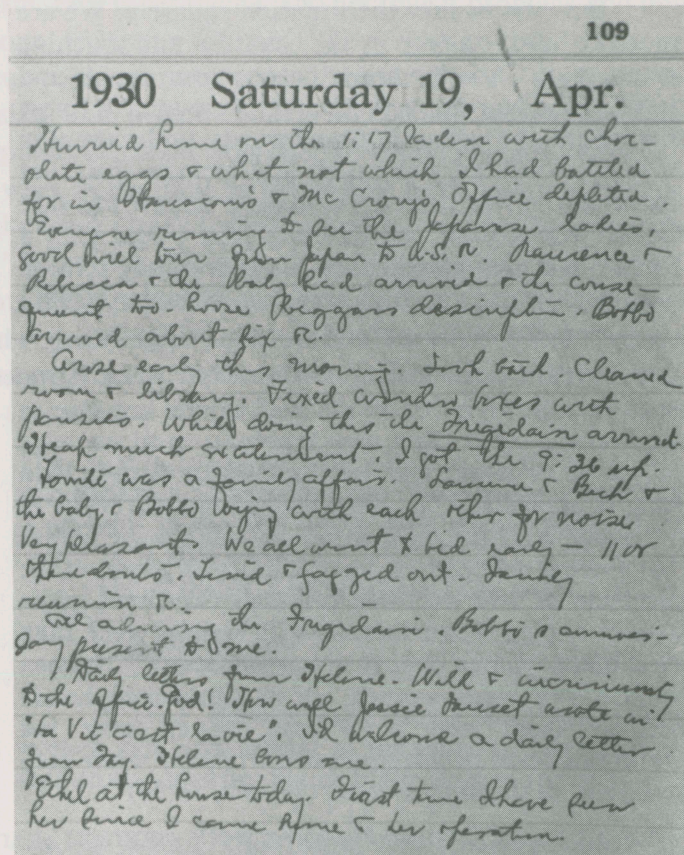
One of her most hard-hitting productions is a piece she wrote for the July 1927 *Messenger* called "Facing Life Squarely," a title she borrowed from the Girl Reserves ritual as an apt guide for "every Aframerican woman in this country." She notes, "we are fond of talking nowadays about 'Progress in Race Relations' " and that much of this is "doubtless true":

But—let us face the situation squarely. We are apt to be lulled to sleep by the beautiful and touching instances of Christian amity between our people and those of the Nordic race. And yet we ought to know that behind the web of honeyed words, under the skin of every Southern white man and woman there lies the venom of race hatred. As in older days it was said that if you scratch any Russian, you would find a Tartar. We may amend that proverb to say scratch every Nordic and you find a cracker. (*Works*, 2:298)

Citing a recent, devastating flood in Mississippi during which black men were slave-worked antebellum-style, she continues:

But until the Negroes of the backwoods are safe in the knowledge of their own freedom; until peonage ceases to be winked at by the law; until the chain gang is abolished . . . , we are hiding our heads in the sand. And the women of our race must realize that there is no progress in sobbing with joy over the spectacle of two or three ordinary Southern white women sitting down to talk with several very high class black women over the race problem . . . when hundreds of black women are wringing their hands because their men have been driven over the crumbling levee to certain death, while the white men stand out of the danger zone. (*Works*, 2:299)

This aspect of Dunbar-Nelson's work contrasts sharply with her belletristic writings. For the most part, her poems are neo-romantic lyrics in rhymed and metered forms which—on the rare occasions when they do—treat topical issues with distance and delicacy. Her local color Louisiana tales have, in the words of one reviewer, "no characteristics peculiar to her race."⁷ In them, she eschews Afro-American characters and culture to present, as one contemporary commentator observed, "delightful Creole stories, all bright and full of the true Creole air of easy-going . . . brief and pleasing, instinct with the passion and romance of the people who will ever be associated with such names as Bayou Teche and Lake Pontchartrain."⁸



Diary entry by Alice Dunbar-Nelson for 19 April 1930. Among the activities described are a visit from her nephew, Laurence, with his wife and baby, and the delivery of a Frigidaire, an anniversary gift from her husband, Robert J. Nelson, known as "Bobbo."

Two extant novels (both unpublished during Dunbar-Nelson's lifetime), "The Confessions of a Lazy Woman" (ca. 1899) and "A Modern Undine" (ca. 1898-1903) feature white, upper-class heroines who enjoy existences totally separated from any mundane realities. Even in the three unpublished stories she wrote based on her relationship with Paul Laurence

Dunbar, the characters are white. The Dunbar character, Burt Courtland—Gerald Kennedy, has intoxicated eyes which are "red-streaked across their blue" and is pictured as a "Greek God" with "chestnut hair" whose emotional face "flares crimson." Dunbar-Nelson's two major plays, *Mine Eyes Have Seen* (1914) and "Gone White" (unpublished typescript), treat issues relating to black American life—whether to support World War I, and the drama of a young man who passes for white, respectively. However, if they had not, there would have been no chance of their ever being staged.⁹

Thus, the overwhelming impression gleaned from a superficial survey of her corpus is that Dunbar-Nelson's authorial life was schizophrenic regarding race. But probing the subtext of her work stirs up hidden meanings. "Sister Josepha," one of the stories in *The Goodness of St. Rocque*, is richly illustrative.¹⁰ At first, it seems to be just another romantically-sad convent tale slightly distinguished by its Old World New Orleans ambience and French patois. Camille, a little "brown" orphan, had grown up at the Convent du Sacré Coeur with "the rest of the waifs; scraps of French and American civilization." When she was fifteen and "almost fully ripened into a glorious tropical beauty," a lady and gentleman wished to adopt her: "The woman suited her; but the man! . . . Untutored in worldly knowledge, she could not divine the meaning of the pronounced leers and admiration of her physical charms which gleamed in the man's face, but she knew it made her feel creepy, and stoutly refused to go."

Rebuked by the Mother Superior, Camille decides to take the veil; but the life of a nun does not suit her. She grows tired of "holy joy," "churchly pleasures," and compares her life with others: "For her were the gray things, the neutral tinted skies, the ugly garb, the coarse meats; for them the rainbow, the ethereal airiness of earthly joys, the bonbons and glacés of the world." At a fête service one day, she falls in love with a pair of tender, handsome eyes: "Perchance, had Sister Josepha

been in the world, the eyes would have been an incident. But in this home of self-repression and retrospection, it was a life-story." She plans to run away, but stops when she realizes "the deception of the life she would lead, and the cruel self-torture of wonder at her own identity." Thus she pauses at the entrance to the convent and "gazed with swift longing eyes in the direction of narrow, squalid Chartres Street, then, with a gulping sob, followed the rest, and vanished behind the heavy door."

In reality, what Dunbar-Nelson has written here is a remarkable exploration of the "heavy door" of illegitimacy, racism, sexism, female vulnerability, traditional religion, and forced confinement. Camille's underplayed "brown hands," "tropical beauty," and lack of identity ("Who am I? What am I?") are her undoing in a work replete with images of enclosure and repression. This subtle flirting with dangerous themes was as far as Dunbar-Nelson was ever able to go in her mass market, published tales.

One story which remained in final draft is even more significant. In "The Stones of the Village," Dunbar-Nelson does not deal with the Creole as a racial monolith, but rather addresses realistically the specific dilemma of the black Creole who has immediate or identifiable Negro ancestry. Young Victor Grabert's childhood has been blighted by his ambiguous racial identity. His loving, but stern, old West Indian grandmother forbids him social interaction with the youngsters on his street (whom she vehemently calls "dose niggers").

It had been loneliness ever since. For the parents of the little black and yellow boys resenting the insult Grandmère had offered their offspring, sternly bade them have nothing more to do with Victor. Then when he toddled after some other little boys, whose faces were white like his own, they ran him away with derisive hoots of "Nigger! Nigger!" And again, he could not understand . . . [A]ll the boys, white and black and yellow hooted at him and

called him "White nigger! White nigger!" (*Works*, 3:5)

Furthermore, Grandmère forces him to cease speaking "the soft, Creole patois that they chattered together" and learn English, the result being "a confused jumble which was no language at all." This "confused jumble," this silence—linguistic, racial, psychic, and emotional—determines his entire life.

A chain of circumstances cuts Victor off from his past, and he becomes a highly successful lawyer and judge, marries into a leading (white) family, and fathers a fine son. Yet the fear of racial exposure torments him and eventually ends in psychosis, madness, and death. He dies apoplectically, about to address a political banquet, imagining that the men who crowd around to help him are "all boys with stones to pelt him because he wanted to play with them." True, this story utilizes the melodramatic motif of passing, but it is a strong foray into the contradictions of race/racism and the cultural confusion of black Creole life (which, here, is no longer "delightful," "bright," "easy-going," and "pleasing").

The sleights of hand which Dunbar-Nelson used to mystify her treatments of race could be even trickier than the two foregoing instances suggest. At some point around 1900, she projected a volume of stories, "The Annals of 'Steenth Street," which drew on her experience doing settlement work and teaching on New York City's East Side in 1897-98. The principal protagonists are Irish ghetto youths who share with their families rather hard times. Money is short or nonexistent, the next meal is a daily problem, parents are alcoholics, and drunken fathers beat their stepdaughters. At bottom, the stories are about oppression, and about difference.

But what is so fascinating is the fact that Dunbar-Nelson uses class difference as a cloaked signifier for race. Doing so allows her to treat the social and emotional dynamics of hierarchical group relationships—the patterns of which closely

NOTICE!!
Mrs. Paul Laurence Dunbar
COMING!

Mrs. ALICE DUNBAR-NELSON
 of Wilmington, Del., formerly the widow of the Great-
 est Negro Poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar
 -Will Lecture At-

THIRD BAPT. CHURCH
FRIDAY, OCT. 7
7:30 P. M.

As a great Lecturer and journalist, Mrs. Dunbar-Nelson is one of the outstanding characters of the day. She is certainly well known in the Literary World throughout the length and breadth of this country. Her name was among the few that was broadcasted over the Radio Sept. 12, when Mrs. Ruth Dennis stepped before a broadcasting station and made a speech on "SOME NOTABLE COLORED WOMEN." She is attractive in Features and in appearance.

This is Mrs. Dunbar's first visit to Portsmouth and she says: "I can give you an 'Evening with Dunbar.'"

The lecture will be illustrated with Readings from the poet.
 The program will be interspersed with Music by the Choir.
 All are invited to attend.

Admission, 25 cents
DR. B. W. DANCE, PASTOR

Shawville Primary, 412 Columbia Street.

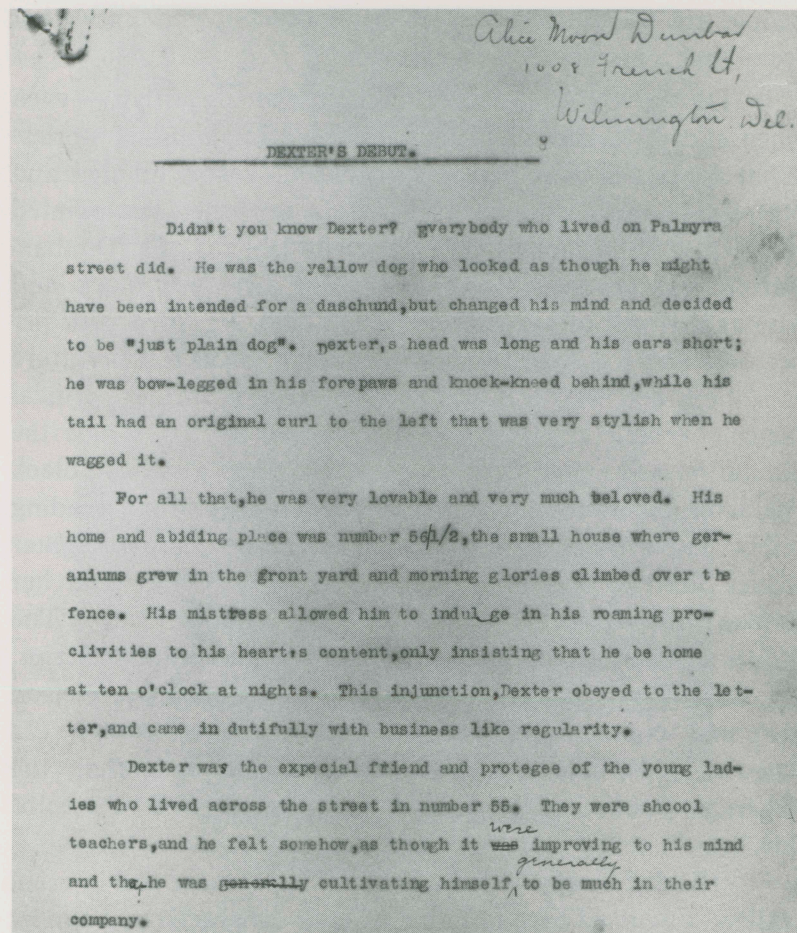
Flyer announcing an appearance by Alice Dunbar-Nelson.

resemble racist paradigms. For example, the vocabulary of racism is unmistakable in the language of an upper-class white matron who thinks she wants to adopt one of the little girls on 'Steenth Street' ("Miss Tillman's Protege," unpublished, printed in *Works*, 3:101-108): "Such a dear, sweet, patient face. She'd look lovely in a dear white apron with her hair smooth sitting at my feet in my study." When the mission director reminds Miss Tillman that Hattie may have "family ties, and a mother," the lady counters, "it's absurd. These

people are very different from us. I thought you knew that from your long experience with them."

On the whole, the most telling racial suggestivity—even when elided—occurs in Dunbar-Nelson's unpublished stories. What appears in them places the conscious reader on alert and buttresses a more complex approach to her other, less-pointed work. It is important to note that, as a general rule, Dunbar-Nelson was most comfortable keeping her own black and woman self out of her literary work. This accorded with her personal ambivalences and with her strict concept of literature as a high art. Marketplace realities were a further, critical factor. Writing apparently aracial fiction let her escape the plantation and minstrel stereotypes which sufficed for black character portraiture with the predominantly white reading public. Experience had also taught her that her simple, slighter stories sold far more easily than her deeper ones (and her serious race works all appear in black publications). "The Stones of the Village," for example, remained in manuscript. To Bliss Perry of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Dunbar-Nelson proposed expanding the story into a novel. In a reply (22 August 1900), he offered his opinion that at present the American public had a "dislike" for treatments of "the color line."

The dichotomy between external appearance and internal reality—discussed here in terms of race—characterized almost every area of Alice Dunbar-Nelson's life. This outwardly decorous and self-assured model of post-Victorian womanhood secretly married a young man twelve years her junior (in 1910) and kept the union concealed, conducted affairs and flirtations with both men and women, enjoyed cards and blackmarket wine with her "roughneck" set of friends, and cried in private about her "utter uselessness." And while scholars either were ignoring her or talking in uncertain tones about her published poems and stories, her treasure of a diary and unforgettable journalism (noncanonical forms which are now being



Corrected typescript of the first page of a short story by Alice Dunbar-Nelson.

valorized) were waiting to be discovered. Clearly, it was not easy for Dunbar-Nelson to be her total self at a time when definitions of blackness, womanness, and black/woman writer were nonexistent, contradictory, limiting, or worse. Even if she never effected a perfect reconciliation, she left behind materials which challenge interested researchers to help make for/with her a qualified, but hopefully lasting peace.

Notes

1. Gloria T. Hull's other work on Alice Dunbar-Nelson includes *Give Us Each Day: The Diary of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1984); chapter in *Color, Sex, and Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); and *The Works of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), hereafter cited as *Works*. This essay is based on material in the Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library. Unless otherwise noted below, individual citations refer to sources in this collection.
2. Undated flyer entitled, "Alice Dunbar Nelson Thrills Great Los Angeles Audience on World Peace and the Negro," *California Eagle*, 14 March 1930.
3. Diary, 1 March 1931, printed in *Give Us Each Day*, p. 419.
4. Undated letter from Alice Dunbar-Nelson to Paul L. Dunbar, ca. December 1898.
5. *Works*, 2:311.
6. "Une Femme Dit," May 15, 1926 (*Works*, 2:155); "As In a Looking Glass," 9 March 1928 (*Works*, 2:205) and 2 March 1928 (*Works*, 2:204).
7. *The New York Ecclesiastical Review*, February 1890.
8. *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, 21 December 1899.
9. "A Modern Undine" is printed in *Works*, 2:3-71; "Mine Eyes Have Seen" in *Works*, 3:239-49; "Gone White," *Works*, 3:250-80.
10. Printed in *Works*, 1:155-72.



Photograph of a portrait of Christopher Ward, painted by Henriette Wyeth in 1926.

Buried Treasures: Some Unpublished Writings of Christopher Ward

JERRY A. SHIELDS

Christopher Longstreth Ward (1868-1943), a jack-of-all-trades, was also a master of many. He excelled as an actor, director, writer of parodies, maker of woodcuts, poet, playwright, novelist, historian, and chairman/organizer of the largest pageant ever held in Delaware—and these were just things he did in his spare time.

Professionally, this Wilmington-born Renaissance man was an attorney who, early in his career, set up a service to help companies incorporate in the First State. In 1920 he merged his own business with a similar one owned by the legendary Josiah Marvel to form the Corporation Service Company, still in operation.

Much of Ward's time, however, as well as his interest and energy, was devoted to cultural activities. He had begun acting in school plays when he was twelve, and, in 1893, after graduating from Harvard Law School, the young man returned to Wilmington. Here, when he wasn't practicing law or courting Caroline Tatnall Bush (who married him in 1897), he took part in amateur theatricals. Gifted at romantic comedy, Ward soon established himself as the area's leading amateur actor—one skilled enough to turn professional had he desired to do so.

He was a popular leading man in Wilmington Dramatic Club productions until this group disbanded in 1898 at the start of the Spanish-American War. After a few years of country living in northern New Castle County, he and his growing family moved back to the city where, in 1904, he and a talented neighbor, Bertha Corson Day Bates, organized a new drama group to entertain local theatergoers.

Before marrying textile executive Daniel M. Bates,¹ Bertha Day had been one of artist Howard Pyle's most promising pupils, but she had given up a career in art to become a wife and mother. She still had a deep interest in cultural activities, however, and the Bates home on Tower Hill was often the scene of gatherings where Chris and Carrie Ward mingled with Bertha's old friends from the Pyle studio. Many of these young artists—including Frank Schoonover, Clifford Ashley, Stanley Arthurs, Gayle Hoskins, Harold Brett, Henry Peck, and Pyle's own sister Katharine—were recruited to act or perform other functions in the new drama group Christopher Ward and Bertha Bates were forming. Other talented Wilmingtonians, among them poet Emily Bissell, novelist-to-be Anne Parrish, and young businessmen H. Rodney Sharp and R. R. M. "Ruly" Carpenter, were part of the group as well.

Enlarged and reorganized in 1907, the drama group was then christened the Green Room Club. With Ward selecting scripts, directing, and usually acting the male leads while Bertha supervised the staging and other details, the Green Room players over the next several years provided Wilmington with amateur theater of professional caliber, playing to standing-room-only crowds in the Grand Opera House.

In 1912, Daniel Bates was assigned to manage a factory in Lewiston, Maine, and moved there, taking his family with him. This brought a premature end to the Green Room Club, which Christopher found he could not run without Bertha's help. It was at this point that Ward, with unaccustomed spare

time on his hands, began to write as a way of venting his creative energies.

At forty-four years of age, he was getting a late start in the field. Many writers have done their best work by the time they're forty. Even so, recognition was slow in coming. Ward would not publish his first book, *The Triumph of the Nut*, until 1923, when he was nearly fifty-five. After that, his output was fairly constant: three more books of humorous parodies—*Gentleman Into Goose* (1924); *Twisted Tales* (1924); *Foolish Fiction* (1925)—two serious novels—*One Little Man* (1926) and *Starling* (1927)—two books of comic verse—*The Saga of Cap'n John Smith* (1928) and *Sir Galahad and Other Rimes* (1936)—two picaresque novels—*Jonathan Drew, A Rolling Stone* (1932) and *A Yankee Rover* (1932)—and four books on historical subjects—*The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware* (1930); *Delaware Tercentenary Almanack & Historical Repository* (1937); *New Sweden on the Delaware* (1938); and *The Delaware Continentals* (1941)—in addition to several shorter works. Left unfinished at the time of his death were a draft of an autobiography² and an important military history, *The War of the Revolution*, later completed by another scholar³ and published in 1952.

This varied output prompted University of Delaware English professor Augustus H. Able, III—the most knowledgeable authority to date on First State writers and their works—to call Ward "that most versatile of literary Delawareans,"⁴ and to include *Jonathan Drew, A Rolling Stone* in his list of the ten best books by Delaware authors.

After Ward's death, his widow Caroline, aided by the University's Henry Clay Reed and John Munroe among others, gave most of her late husband's books to the University of Delaware Library, then housed in Memorial Hall. Many of these books, especially those the author had collected as source materials for his histories and picaresque novels, were shelved in a special "Christopher Ward Room" dedicated in 1947 to

honor the writer's accomplishments. Later these general holdings were dispersed throughout the collection in the Hugh M. Morris Library. The author's papers and the rare books were transferred to Special Collections.

The Ward Papers include correspondence between the author and various editors, publishers, agents and other literary acquaintances; scrapbooks, reviews and other clippings; notes and early manuscript or typescript drafts of published works; and drafts of unpublished works. It is upon the last category—those writings which, for one reason or another, Ward never published—that this article is intended to focus.

In a search through the Ward Papers, the browser's eye is soon caught by a neatly-typed title page which reads: "The Highwayman / A Play In One Act / by / Christopher L. Ward / Wilmington, Delaware / 1913."

The work this title page introduces turns out to have nothing to do with Alfred Noyes's famous poem of the same name. Instead, it is a witty, finely-polished and carefully-crafted little romantic comedy Ward wrote just about the time he was winding down his stage career. "The Highwayman" can be said, in fact, to mark the end of Ward's days as an actor and director and the beginning of his career as a writer.

Talking about "careers" in acting, directing and writing for a man who was supposedly a full-time lawyer and businessman may sound strange, but the fact is that Ward's business activities at this time were being capably run by a skilled office manager, George G. Stiegler, leaving "the boss" time to write even during office hours. Ward himself, in his autobiography, has described his professional and business career as "not distinguished, but respectable," and it is obvious that, during the last several decades of his life, he was far more interested in literature and history than corporation law, though the latter provided him with far more income. By training and necessity, Ward was yoked to law, but by in-

clination and choice, he was an actor and writer who courted public attention and fame.

When he wrote "The Highwayman" in 1913, it is likely that Ward was planning to act the male lead himself, since that character's physical description matches his own exactly, and the role is the sort he was accustomed to playing. The play, short as it is, is certainly no closet drama. It was meant to be acted, and the stage directions and dialogue are flawlessly done and clearly meant to entertain a live audience. Yet the thirty-two-page copy in the Ward Papers at the University is the only one known to exist, and no evidence has surfaced to indicate that "The Highwayman" was ever published or produced.

The plot revolves around two cases of mistaken identity: the heroine thinks a mysterious visitor to an eighteenth-century country inn is a highwayman who has held up a stage, while he believes her to be a barmaid rather than the squire's daughter his father has arranged for him to marry. All works out neatly and cleverly in a manner calculated to satisfy an audience come to enjoy light entertainment.

If "The Highwayman" is not classic theater, neither is it amateurish. As a veteran of the stage, Ward was too much the perfectionist to take a dilettante's approach, too well attuned to audience sensibilities to write a dull play. He has managed his stage business well, and taken care to capture the provincial dialect spoken in a small region of southern England. If this was Ward's first attempt at play-writing, it is remarkably successful.

There is another Ward manuscript extant, however, which probably slightly predates "The Highwayman" and may well have led to its composition. This is an undated essay—possibly the text of a speech—entitled "Old Vauxhall Gardens." The author's daughter, Alison Ward (Mrs. C. Lalor) Burdick, still has the only copy her father is known to have saved, but she was kind enough to permit the writer of this

article to make a copy for himself and another for the University Library's Special Collections.

"Old Vauxhall Gardens," fourteen pages long, is the product of research Ward evidently did on this park, which was a popular recreation spot for Londoners and other tourists between 1660, when it opened, and 1859, when it finally closed after falling into disrepair. During its two centuries of operation, Vauxhall attracted many thousands of visitors, including a number of writers who used the Gardens as a setting for scenes in their literary works. As his own contribution to Vauxhall-related literature, Ward has composed a brief history of the Gardens, spicing his narrative with quotes from earlier visitors including diarists John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys, dramatists William Congreve and William Wycherley, satirist Jonathan Swift, poet Oliver Goldsmith, novelists Horace Walpole, William Makepeace Thackeray, Fanny Burney, and others.

Why Ward wrote "Old Vauxhall Gardens" is not clear. A guess is that this was the subject of a talk he was giving before some group interested in English history and literature. What links this work to "The Highwayman" is a passage in the play where the hero explains to the heroine that the reason he has a mask in his pocket (the earlier discovery of which had led her to assume he was the highwayman who had recently robbed a stage) is because he recently attended a masquerade party at Vauxhall Gardens. This link suggests that Ward had been doing research on the Gardens when he was writing "The Highwayman."

Also in the Ward Papers is a curious item which predates "The Highwayman," and probably "Old Vauxhall Gardens" as well, by several years. This is a tiny newspaper—its three printed pages measuring only 4 x 5¼ inches each—called the *Tower Hill Times*. This particular issue is Volume 1, Number 3, and it is dated January 23, 1909. It was apparently done on a toy printing press by Ward with, and for, his three children

TOWER HILL TIMES.
PICTURESQUE AMERICA,
or The Land We Live In.



III. RESIDENCE OF MR. WALTER PYLE.

The handsome villa here depicted is famous for the agricultural operations carried on by its proprietor.



IV. GARDENS OF THE LITTLE WHITE HOUSE.

This picture shows the famous Pump, whose sad story is told in another column of this paper.

Woodcut illustrations from the *Tower Hill Times* volume 1, number 3 (January 23, 1909).

Christopher, Jr., Esther, and Rodman (daughter Alison was born later) to teach them the rudiments of newspaper production.

While all three children (still in their preteens at that time) are listed on the masthead as the editor, assistant editor, and business manager respectively, it is obvious that an adult hand was present in the writing, typesetting and illustration of this issue of the *Tower Hill Times* (so-called because the Wards were living in the Tower Hill section of Wilmington at this period). It is also clear—to anyone familiar with Ward's later works—that this little newspaper is written and illustrated with woodcuts in a style characteristic of the books of parodies he would publish in the mid-1920s.

Ward's experience with toy printing presses went back to his own childhood. In his autobiography he wrote that, as boys in Wilmington during the 1870s, he and Dan Bush⁵—his next-door neighbor, cousin, and best friend—often played with a toy press Dan had gotten as a gift one Christmas, and had printed a number of their own writings upon it.

Ward evidently felt this experience had been beneficial to him and he made sure his own children would have it as they were growing up. The *Tower Hill Times* was the result of this, but, more importantly, it shows the flashes of ironic wit and clever style that would be typical of Ward's work some fifteen years later, when he began writing and publishing the parodies that would win him national fame.

The person most responsible for getting Ward's works published in national periodicals was a cousin, Henry Seidel Canby, a fellow Wilmingtonian who had gone to Yale and stayed on after graduating to become an English professor and associate editor of the prestigious *Yale Review*. Following his cousin's suggestion, Ward sent a political tract he'd written in the guise of a short story to Ellery Sedgwick, a friend of Canby's who was editor of *Atlantic Monthly*. The piece, titled "The New Slavery," was based on Ward's experiences as

Director of the Delaware Compulsory Work Bureau during World War I and was rather bitter. It appeared in the *Atlantic's* January, 1919, issue but failed to attract much attention.

Two years later, Ward sent Canby, who published it in the *Yale Review*, "In Praise of Brick and Oak," a pleasant essay he'd written while building an impressive house on the Pennsylvania-Delaware border near Centreville.

Canby at this time was making a move from Yale to Manhattan, where he had just accepted the job of founding and editing a literary periodical that would be an adjunct of the *New York Evening Post*. This magazine, *The Literary Review*, would print works by some of the most interesting writers in America, evolving, after splitting from the *Post* in 1924, into *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

Ward kept in close touch with Canby and soon sent him the rough draft of a novel, *Bill*, he had just written. Canby helpfully suggested some editor friends who might be interested in publishing *Bill* as a book or magazine series, but none of these leads proved fruitful, and no copy of Ward's first attempt at a novel appears to have survived.

Probably as a way of venting his frustrations at not getting his own novel published, Ward began writing parodies of best-selling novels, and Canby, starting in 1922, accepted several of these for publication in *The Literary Review*. When they proved popular, Ward collected them, plus a few others he had written, into a book published in 1923 by Henry Holt & Co. He also had three later books of parodies (many of the pieces having first appeared in *The Literary Review*) published over the next two years.

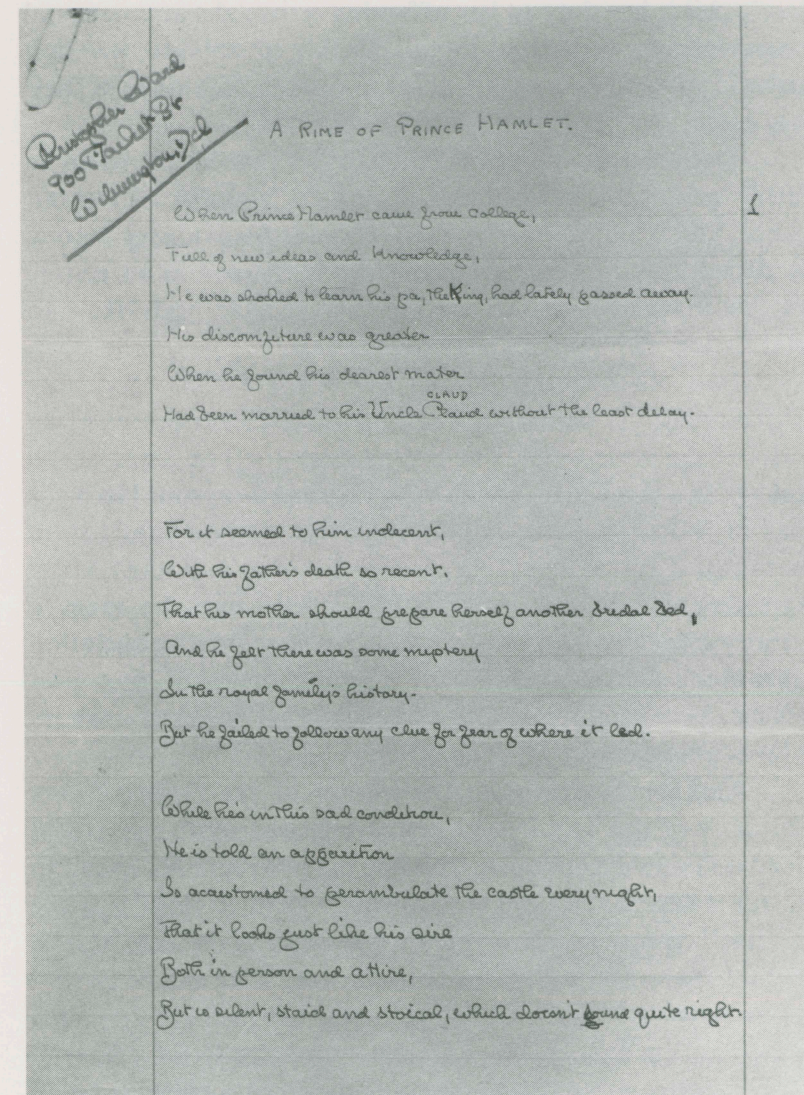
Yet even as he was writing them, Ward knew how transient his parodies were, depending as they did upon the brief popularity of the best-sellers they lampooned. He wanted a more permanent place in literary history than parodies could provide, and tried other types of prose writing to expand his scope and his markets. One ambitious project was a United

States history which would debunk many of the myths that had grown up around famous figures, but he only wrote one essay, "Columbus the Discoverer," and, when he was unable to sell that to a magazine, gave up on the larger work as well. No copy of the Columbus manuscript seems to have survived, so we know little except that it was an unflattering, satirical look at the Genoan whose discoveries gave Spain first claim on the New World.

During the early twenties Ward tried his hand at writing short stories, but had no luck in getting any of them published in magazines. He sent out one funny story, "The Three Blueberrys," late in 1924, but it was lost, either by his agent or a magazine to which it had been submitted, and Ward had apparently failed to make another copy. Copies of a few other stories written around this time do survive in the Ward Papers, though, allowing us to see examples of his work in this genre.

The author evidently had trouble deciding on a name for one short story; on the title page he calls it "Easy Street, or Annie, or The Long Lane, or Around the Corner, or Chance Decides, or As It Happened." This story is undated, but the heavy-handed melodrama and over-reliance on coincidence suggest that it was probably one of the first stories he tried.

The plot is implausible and didactic: during the eight years Tom Brayley and his wife Annie have been married, he has worked his way up from packer to full partner in the wholesale hardware firm of Tower, Hill & Co. The pair seem to be on "Easy Street" until a shadowy figure comes to their house late one night and confronts Tom. As the story unfolds, we learn that Brayley had escaped from jail more than eight years earlier and married the wife of a fellow prisoner he assumed had been killed in the same jailbreak. It is this man, however, who now turns up, and Annie is forced to choose between her first husband and her second. Her decision, once she makes up her mind, is based not on which man she loves or feels married to, but upon the fact that she is the mother of



Manuscript of a parodic poem by Christopher Ward.

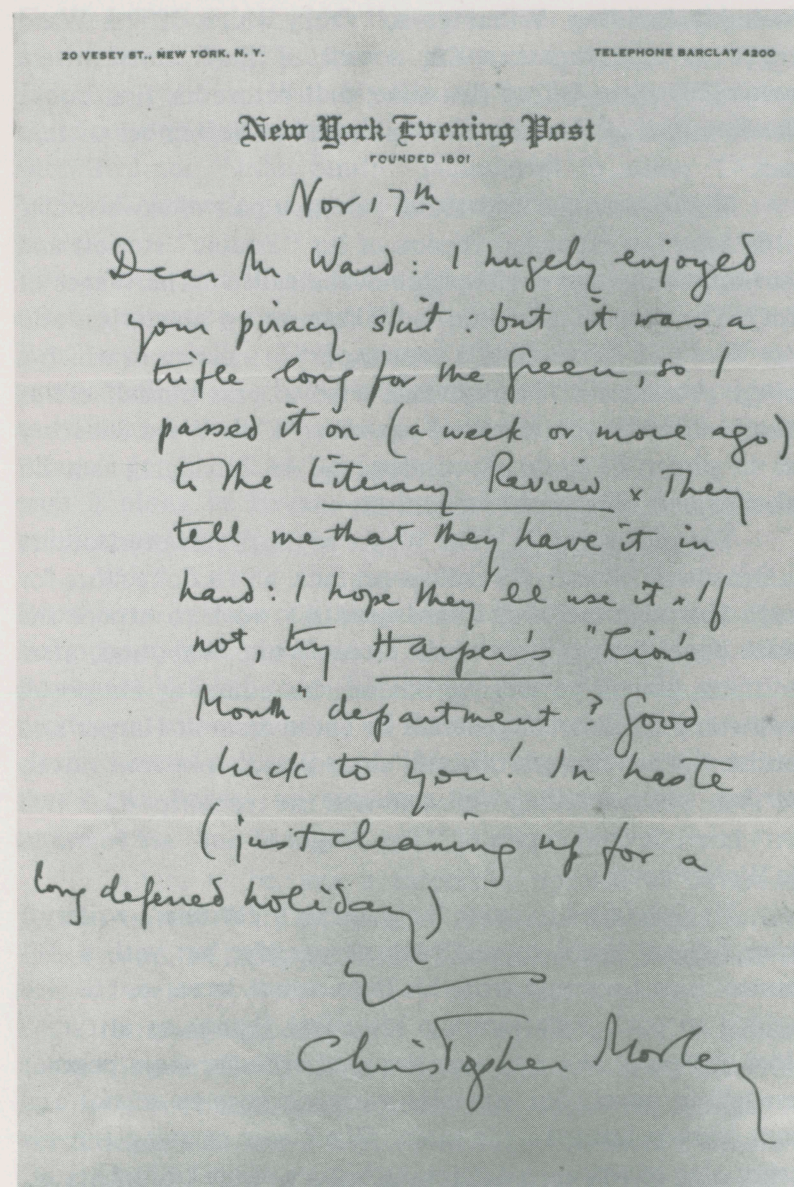
Tom's child: her duty to her offspring outweighs any personal considerations. Impressed by this display of nobility, her first husband vows to go his way, never to darken their door or their lives again.

This sentimental story demonstrates that Ward, when he wasn't writing deft parodies, could be a moralist of the old school, and a clumsy one at that. There is no evidence among his papers that he ever submitted "Easy Street" to an editor, but few magazines of the twenties would have been likely to print fiction with such dated themes as this.

Two other stories among the Ward Papers, probably written about the same time as "Easy Street," are actually two drafts of the same work. The protagonist of "The Signs of the Zodiac" is a meek little bookkeeper, Herbie Simpson. Herbie is weak of chin, education and intellect, but long on imagination (in many ways anticipating James Thurber's Walter Mitty character). He fails to impress his bosses until he takes a memory-improvement course that teaches word-association utilizing the signs of the Zodiac. With this new skill, plus a bit of luck, he wins a promotion and makes his daughter—whom he loves above all else—proud of him.

Another typescript, "The Master of the Zodiac," is a later draft of this plot in which Ward deleted some details and added a dialogue between an outside narrator and his friend to provide a box around the central story. Neither version of the "Zodiac" piece was ever published, and it is not known whether Ward ever submitted them or not. They can be classed as apprentice writings, interesting mainly for the light they shed on their author's psychology. Both versions, and "Easy Street" as well, center around a parent's devotion to a child as being more important than the marriage bond. This is significant in Ward's case, as he had been raised by his mother after she divorced his father when the boy was five years old.

Neither "Easy Street" nor the "Zodiac" stories are dated, but the title page of each bears the address "602



Autograph letter signed, dated November 17 [1922], from Christopher Morley to Christopher Ward.

Equitable Building, Wilmington," from which offices Ward moved in mid-August, 1923, so all of these stories were presumably done before that time, and before his first book, *The Triumph of the Nut*, was published in September of that year.

Ward spent the mid-1920s writing a pair of novels, *One Little Man* (an expanded version of his "Zodiac" stories) and *Starling*, then wrote a 100-page novella called "The Wages of Sin." The plot of this latter work focuses on plagiarism and may have had its origin in a contemporary incident in which a college professor in Pennsylvania tried to pass himself off as the author of Ward's books of parodies. While Ward felt sorry for the sinner, he could not condone the sin, infringing as it did upon his own efforts and reputation.

The plagiarism in "The Wages of Sin," however, occurs on Broadway instead of a college campus, and is done more for profit than ego-building. Ward used the work to expose the sleaze beneath the glitter of the Great White Way, and, after polishing, sent it to Eugene Saxton, his editor at Harper & Brothers. Saxton could generate no enthusiasm at Harper's to publish the novella, particularly since Ward's previous novel, *Starling*, was not selling well, and sent the typescript back two years later. Several copies of "The Wages of Sin" are found in the Ward Papers.

Having failed to make the grade as a "serious" writer of prose fiction, Ward turned back to parody, but with a difference: now he would write his little satires in verse. He also decided to stick with familiar historical figures to attract a wider audience. Not everyone has read even the most popular best-selling novel, but virtually everyone goes to school and reads history texts. In the main, Ward was carrying out his earlier plan of writing a debunking history of the United States, but using more humor and composing in verse rather than prose.

Ward's first attempt at verse parody was "The Saga of

Cap'n John Smith," which lampooned not only the adventures of the famed English explorer but also worked in sly digs at Jazz Age customs. With his fine ear for language, Ward was quite comfortable writing in rhyme and meter, and, when he submitted the "John Smith" manuscript to editor Thomas Wells of *Harper's* magazine, he wrote the cover letter in verse as well.

Wells and Ward had a friendly, joshing relationship, often addressing one another as "Uncle Tom" and "Little Eva" respectively. (Their mutual friend, artist N. C. Wyeth, was sometimes referred to by both men in their correspondence as "Simon Legree.") Although Wells did not accept the Smith "Saga" for his "Lion's Mouth" column in *Harper's*, he did pass it along to Eugene Saxton of Harper & Brothers for publication in book form.

Ward rewrote and expanded the central John Smith-Pocahontas episode of his saga into a libretto for a comic opera he hoped to have produced on Broadway, but this work, "Mr. Powhatan," failed to excite enough interest among agents or producers, although many of them considered the lyrics quite clever. Several typescripts of "Mr. Powhatan" survive among the Ward Papers as remnants of a dream that did not materialize.

Failure to become a successful novelist or Broadway lyricist turned Ward in another direction. He began writing history and, in 1930, published *The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware*, aptly described in promotional literature as "the first complete account of the beginnings of American civilization in the Delaware River region." Soon after this scholarly but humorously-written study appeared, though, the versatile author turned back to fiction—historical fiction this time, with the first of a series of picaresque novels chronicling the adventures of a colorful young rogue on the American frontier during the early nineteenth century. Ward's aim was to blend historical events, people and places into a fast-paced

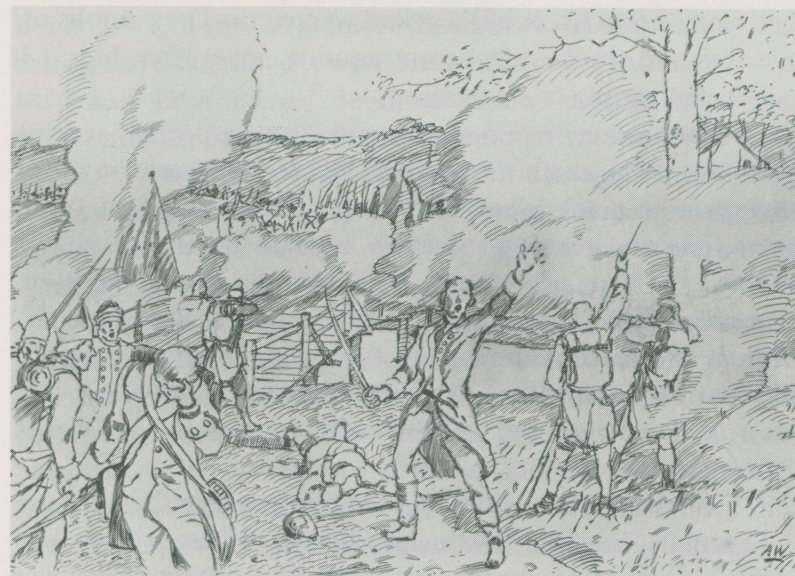
fictional narrative readers couldn't put down without finishing. To prepare for this project, he spent a year collecting and reading first-person accounts of life in the early 1800s, before the railroad changed the face of the frontier.

The Strange Adventures of Jonathan Drew, A Rolling Stone and a sequel, *A Yankee Rover*, both published in 1932, generally delighted critics, but their appearance at the nadir of the Depression was poorly timed to garner large sales for publishers Simon & Schuster. As letters in the Ward Papers attest, both Richard Simon and M. Lincoln Schuster regretted that these two books, on which they had staked high hopes, did not fare better in the marketplace. At one point Simon wrote Ward: "It was a great pity that we weren't able to sell more copies of the Jonathan Drew books. As you know, a considerable amount of advertising was done for them, but somehow the public stayed away in droves. This phenomenon has occurred not only at Simon & Schuster but in every other publishing house."⁶

Lincoln Schuster was even more sympathetic, telling Ward that although "sales have not been as good as they should have been . . . *Jonathan Drew* and *A Yankee Rover* are deeply lodged in our affection, and I am of the opinion that one of these days you will develop a new setting or a new character and score a success of the first magnitude with another novel."⁷

Ward had been hoping the Drew novels would be successful, since he had put much time and effort into them, and he was mightily disappointed that they did not sell better. Initially he had planned to write only one book using the Drew character, but after doing enough pages for a novel of reasonable length he still had plenty of research material left. On May 26, 1931, he had written an editor at Viking to whom he was submitting the *Jonathan Drew* manuscript:

You will note that I carry my man only through the year 1825. I have in mind a sequel which will carry



Drawing by Andrew Wyeth of the "Fight at Cooch's Bridge," published as an illustration in Christopher Ward's *Delaware Tercentenary Almanack & Historical Repository*, 1938 (Newark, Delaware: The Press of Kells, 1937).

his story from that point through a number of other adventures, which I have already mapped out. It will take him into the South of that period, then on to the Mississippi River, to New Orleans, and finally into Texas at a period when Texas was just gaining its independence. It will include also a transcontinental journey on the Santa Fé Trail and will probably end after the battle of San Jacinto, where Sam Houston licked the Mexicans.⁸

Again Ward had underestimated. As his first book would carry Jonathan Drew from 1821 to part-way through 1824 (not 1825), so the second novel, *A Yankee Rover*, would take him only to 1829, still seven years shy of the Battle of San Jacinto. It would take yet another book to get that far, but Ward had already done enough research to write it. Lincoln Schuster, however, after publication of the first two volumes, was telling

their author that his publishers had written the Drew books off as a loss and would only accept another novel from him if it had "a new setting or a new character."

Ward was as economical about time—especially writing time—as he was about money, and he hated to waste anything he'd spent so much labor on. He'd put too many hours into researching and plotting the Drew saga just to throw the last part away. Changing settings, then, was out of the question. Changing heroes, on the other hand, was a fairly simple matter. Without much restructuring, he could simply give his man a different name, appearance and background, then plunk him down in the period and let him carry through with the plot already outlined for the third Drew novel.

Thus was born Andrew Jackson Pike, about the same age as Jonathan Drew but two inches shorter. Whereas Drew had been born in Massachusetts and moved to Ohio, Pike was described as being raised by foster parents in Ohio after being pulled off a river boat on which his real parents had died of the plague. Except for such small details, Jackson Pike, for all practical purposes, was Jonathan Drew.

Having established a new identity for his protagonist, Ward then wrote another novel based on his outline, carrying it through the Battle of San Jacinto as he had intended all along. He titled it "The Memoirs of a Rascal" and sent it off to Simon & Schuster in the fall of 1935. But the publishers, not yet over their own gloom about the Drew books' sparse sales, were in no mood to risk another failure with a novel of the same sort. Richard Simon wrote Ward saying that, while he had found the manuscript "hard to put down," he felt it was not quite up to the standard of the two Drew novels. The hero, he added, "doesn't enlist my sympathy or interest to the extent that Jonathan Drew did . . . The personality of Andrew doesn't make the blood run quicker."

Whether this was really his feeling, or whether the publisher was merely looking for an excuse to turn the new

book down, it can be stated with some assurance that Ward's third picaresque novel would have been much the same if the hero had been named Jonathan Drew instead of Andrew Jackson Pike. And whether it was up to the standard of its predecessors or not, "The Memoirs of a Rascal" is still a rip-roaring good adventure novel that brings alive, in a relatively accurate way, the history and feeling of a neglected part of America's past.

Ward was then at or near the peak of his powers as a novelist, having just completed two books which, had the country not been mired in the Depression, might well have become best sellers and furnished the materials for a movie or two. But the Drew novels had not caught the reading public's fancy, and, as a result, "The Memoirs of a Rascal," the third book in the series, remains unpublished and packed away in a box in the University of Delaware Library.

Readers who would not accept Ward as a novelist liked him better when he kept things short, light and funny, and the mid-1930s found him publishing in humorist Franklin P. Adams's widely-read "Conning Tower" column in the *New York Herald-Tribune* a series of comic poems on classic heroes and heroines. While a number of these were published in book form as *Sir Galahad and Other Rimes* (1936), an almost equal number in the same vein appeared in the newspaper but not in a book, evidently because *Sir Galahad* did not sell well enough to encourage a sequel.

Copies of these remaining "Conning Tower" poems are among the Ward Papers, and included with them are a series of eight "Unnatural History" poems about mythological creatures: the gorgon, griffin, chimaera, unicorn, sphinx, cockatrice (or basilisk), phoenix and salamander. These latter poems, like all of Ward's comic verse, are witty and cleverly rhymed, but the "Unnatural History" verses exist only in single handwritten copies done in Ward's neatly-rounded script. No typed copies are extant, suggesting either that their author

planned to do more or that he had not yet brought them to a stage where they could be typed for submission. None of these poems is dated, but their style indicates that Ward probably wrote them at about the same time as the "Conning Tower" verses, that is, around 1936. They seem to be in finished form, well-polished and erudite, displaying their author's deft touch with language, rhyme and meter.

Probably the last significant work Ward wrote but did not publish is a murder mystery novel he called "The Other Man." This work, like several others previously discussed, exists among the Ward Papers only in undated copies, but internal clues suggest that it was written in the mid-to-late 1930s. Initial episodes take place in October and November, 1935, and, as it is not science fiction, there is no apparent reason why its author would have set it in the future. Additionally, the chief male character (who is also the narrator) tells us he held a job some years earlier "as a bond salesman in New York in the Fall of 1931 when nobody was buying bonds or anything else." Unless he was psychic, Ward would not have known that detail without having lived through the Depression years himself. Hence "The Other Man" is likely to have been written no earlier than 1936.

The typescript of this novel is slightly less than 300 pages long (compared to nearly 500 for "The Memoirs of a Rascal"), and consists almost entirely of narration and dialogue. The style is spare and lean, with virtually no description or extraneous detail to slow the pace. The setting is in and near "Springfield"—a fictional town name Ward sometimes used to disguise an actual locale—but the mention of neighboring places such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, Crisfield and Chincoteague, plus the fact that the book's murder takes place in a tidal marsh, suggest that the author had Wilmington in mind as the principal location.

The plot of "The Other Man," while conventional, is well worked out and moves along swiftly to the requisite

surprise ending. Characters are developed almost entirely through dialogue, as in a drama. Ward appears to have moved toward a terser style in this last of his fictional works. I have found no reference to "The Other Man" in Ward's correspondence, so he may never have submitted it to a publisher. Two draft copies are among the Ward Papers, both typed, but with a number of corrections, additions and deletions in the author's handwriting. A guess is that Ward, having essentially finished the novel except for minor revisions, set it aside to devote his remaining energies to his historical works *The Delaware Continentals* and *The War of the Revolution*, the latter of which he was working on at the time of his death.

For a man who was not a writer or historian by profession, Christopher Ward, over the last two decades of his life, produced a remarkable number of works which still stand as significant contributions to historiography and literature. Although none of his works sold well enough during his lifetime to win him the recognition he sought, this says less about their merit than about public taste. Among the cognoscenti, Ward was read, recognized and held in high esteem. Part of his problem was that he belonged, in taste and experience if not entirely in spirit, to an earlier generation than the ones he was writing for. His work was too classical and universal in tone to capture the *Zeitgeist* of the Jazz Age and the Depression years.

Ward wrote for fame, not money. He got precious little of either, considering the number and quality of his writings. But many of the tastemakers of his day revered him, and his works have not dated nearly as badly as he feared. Many of his parodies, read today, are still fresh, funny and clever, while his histories stand as well-written, definitive treatments of their subject areas. His published novels, while they have some flaws, also possess many virtues.

As for his unpublished works, they deserve a far better

fate than the neglect they have received. Some, particularly the short stories, are apprentice works interesting mainly as examples of their author's developing style. But several of the manuscripts among the Ward Papers are finished products of high quality composed when Ward was at his prime as a writer, especially "Mr. Powhatan," the "Unnatural History" poems and the two novels, "The Memoirs of a Rascal" and "The Other Man."

Any writer should be judged on his best works, but several of Ward's finest writing have never had the opportunity to make their way in the world. Some of the author's works have been lost, probably irretrievably so, but those in the Ward Papers that are still unpublished should have their day in the sun, their chance to win for Christopher Ward the literary reputation he eagerly sought and deserved, but never fully attained.

Notes

1. Daniel Moore Bates (1876-1953), of a prominent Delaware family, had a distinguished career as an industrialist and military officer. After returning to Delaware in the 1920s, he conceived the idea of "Historic New Castle" and was instrumental in helping restore the town to recapture the quaint charm of its colonial days. Bertha was also active in historical projects, editing and writing an introduction to *Portraits in Delaware, 1700-1850*, published in 1951.

2. This work, written—or started, at least—around 1935, deals in considerable detail with Ward's early years, but is sketchy or silent about the latter part of his life. In its obviously unfinished condition it was edited by family friend Charles Lee Reese, Jr., who published it in *Delaware History* 15 (April 1973):157-86 and (October 1973): 220-55.

3. John Richard Alden, who edited the substantial manuscript Ward had left and added one chapter, "George Rogers Clark and the West," of his own.

4. In his chapter "Delaware Literature" in Henry Clay Reed and Marion Björnson Reed's *Delaware: A History of the First State* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1947).

5. Joshua Danforth Bush grew up to become owner of Bush & Raynor, a lumber supply firm, and also served as an Army colonel during World War I and later as Lieutenant Governor of Delaware under Governor Denny (1921-25).

6. From a copy of a letter in the Ward Papers from Richard Simon to Christopher Ward, dated March 9, 1936.

7. From a copy of a letter in the Ward Papers from M. Lincoln Schuster to Christopher Ward, dated July 18, 1935.

8. From a copy of a letter in the Ward Papers from Christopher Ward to George Oppenheimer, an editor at Viking Press, dated May 26, 1931.

9. From a copy of a letter in the Ward Papers from Richard Simon to Christopher Ward, dated April 2, 1936.

1988 Manuscript Acquisitions

TIMOTHY MURRAY

Bartlett, Lee. The papers of the American author and editor, including the Archives of *American Poetry* magazine and extensive correspondence with Theodore Enslin, Clayton Eshleman, James Laughlin, Robert Peters, Karl Shapiro, Nathaniel Tarn, Diane Wakoski, and other contemporary literary figures.

Book Trade Scrapbook. Bound volume containing 158 broadsides listing books for sale by early American publishers and booksellers (ca. 1837-1848). The scrapbook, compiled by Thomas H. Webb, a Boston bookseller, represents a precursor to the *Publisher's Trade List Annual*, which R. R. Bowker began to issue regularly in 1874.

Bowles, Paul. Additions to the Paul Bowles Papers include correspondence from Bowles to the small press publisher Michael Wolfe (Tombouctou Press) and to the author Charles Henri Ford; and a manuscript notebook for Bowles's translation of Mohamed Choukri's novel, *For Bread Alone*.

Brayman, Harold H. The papers of the late Harold H. Brayman (1900-1988), author and journalist who was director of public relations for the Du Pont Company from 1942 to 1965. Numerous scrapbooks document all facets of Brayman's journalism career, during which he covered every national political convention from 1928 to 1940 and was elected president of the National Press Club (1938) and the Gridiron Club (1941). Extensive files of correspondence, speeches, and other material document fully Harold Brayman's pioneering work in the field of corporate public relations.

Coleman, Emily. The papers of Emily Holmes Coleman (1899-1974), the American expatriate writer and author of the novel *The Shutter of Snow* (1930). During the 1920s Coleman was associated with the group of writers in Paris who contributed to *transition* magazine. In addition to Coleman's manuscripts, personal notebooks, diaries, family correspondence and memorabilia, the papers include extensive groups of letters from George Barker, Djuna Barnes, Peggy Guggenheim, Phyllis Jones, Katherine Raine, Dylan Thomas, Antonia White, and others.

Combs, Tram. Extensive collection of letters to the poet and bookseller from the poet John Malcolm Brinnin (whose papers are housed in the University of Delaware Library) and Frank Collymore, the poet and editor of the important West Indian poetry magazine *Bim*.

Delaware Collection. Additions include three early nineteenth-century New Castle County indentures; autograph letters from Thomas Rodney to his daughter, 1793: September 15, and from Thomas McKeane and John Dickinson to Caesar Rodney, 1779: July 22; two documents in the hand of George Read, dated 1788 and 1791; an autograph document, 1777: August, from James Booth to John Clark, Sheriff of New Castle County; and two early twentieth-century photographs taken in Smyrna, Delaware, depicting the town band and a minstrel show.

Frear, J. Allen, Jr. The papers of J. Allen Frear, Jr., University of Delaware trustee and former United States Senator from Delaware, who served in the Senate from 1948 to 1960. The Frear Papers (ca. 200 linear feet) include extensive files of correspondence, memoranda, office files, reports, documents, photographs, and memorabilia documenting J. Allen Frear, Jr.'s senatorial career.

Goodrich, Lloyd. Papers of Lloyd Goodrich (1897-1987), former director of the Whitney Museum of American Art and leading scholar of American art, relating to Goodrich's research on the American artist Albert Pinkham Ryder. The collection includes Goodrich's manuscripts, correspondence, and printed material, as well as some original Ryder manuscripts and correspondence, contemporary photographs of Ryder, sketches and a group of fifteen forgeries of Ryder's paintings.

Harris, Mark. Addition to the Mark Harris Papers, including manuscripts, correspondence, journals, and miscellaneous material.

Hoskins, Katherine. The papers of the American poet Katherine Hoskins (1909-1988), including manuscripts of her published and unpublished work, personal notebooks, family correspondence and memorabilia, printed material, and a small literary correspondence which contains letters from Malcolm Cowley, Barbara Gibbs and Francis Golfing, Robert Lowell, William Meredith, and Virgil Thomson.

Justice, Donald. Addition to the Donald Justice Papers, including manuscript and proof material of published and unpublished poetry and prose, and letters from the authors Marvin Bell, Philip Booth, Donald Hall, John Irving, Philip Levine, Robert Mezey, Richard Stern, Mark Strand, Charles Wright, and others.

Miscellaneous literary and historical papers. Letters of John Malcolm Brinnin, William Everson, Frederick Marryat, and Karl Shapiro; manuscripts of Lord Dunsany, William Everson, and Julian Hawthorne.

Moore, George. Additions to the George Moore Collection comprise eight letters, concerning publishing matters, from Moore to Horace Liveright and others.

Plough Press. Additions to the Archive of the Plough Press, including correspondence, manuscripts and proof material, ephemera and business records, as well as photographs, illustrative material, and a collection of books, periodicals and other printed materials from the library of Geoffrey Wakeman, who operated the Plough Press until his death in 1987.

Williams, John J. The papers of John J. Williams (1904-1988), the late United States Senator from Delaware who served in the Senate from 1947 to 1970. The Williams Papers (ca. 625 linear feet) include extensive files of correspondence, memoranda, office files, reports, documents, photographs, and memorabilia documenting John J. Williams's twenty-four-year career as a United States Senator.

Williams, Tennessee. Additions to the Tennessee Williams Collection included eighteen manuscripts of Williams's fiction and dramatic work. Of particular note are a draft of the early Williams play, *The Fugitive Kind*, working scripts of *The Night of the Iguana*, *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, *This Is an Entertainment*, *Slapstick Tragedy*, and a draft of his novella *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*. Seventy pieces of theatrical and film ephemera relating to Williams's work, including programs, playbills, photographs, and posters, were also added.

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GLORIA T. HULL is Professor of Women's Studies & Literature, University of California, Santa Cruz. She was formerly a member of the English Department, University of Delaware.

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