

The Fossil

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Jack Visser Succumbs at Age 88

by Dave Tribby

JOHN HASELWOOD VISSER, known as Jack, was born August 27, 1930, in Montrose, Pennsylvania, the younger son of John Arthur Visser and Mary Elizabeth Haselwood. His father, a Presbyterian minister, relocated the family to parishes in Endicott, New York and Wheeling, West Virginia before taking a Detroit, Michigan call in 1946. Jack graduated from Detroit's Highland Park High School, then attended the College of Wooster in Wooster, Ohio, graduating in 1952 with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. After earning a Divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey (where his father also graduated) he accepted a call to the Presbyterian church in Amanda, Ohio in June 1955. He later received a Doctoral degree from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois. He served several churches in Ohio, including ones in Orrville, Carrollton, and Flushing. From 1969 to 1974 he was executive director of the Tuscarawas County Council for Church and Community, based in New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Jack married Nona Suzanne Williston in 1953. They had three children, Timothy, Anne, and Janet. They divorced in 1970. In 1971 Jack married Sylvia Anne Eastman; they had two children, Marianne and John. Sylvia, an ordained Presbyterian elder, died in June 2014.

At the age of 12, Jack began printing on a 5 by 8 Kelsey press, and letterpress printing would remain a lifelong interest. He was introduced to the National Amateur Press Association by a magician named Curt McClelland, who also ran a letterpress shop in Canton, Ohio. Jack met him in the early 1970s while looking for some magic tricks for his teenage son. Curt and Jack continued to be in contact about printing, and eventu-

ally he suggested Jack should contact Gary Bossler about NAPA. Jack received his official welcome in June 1984.

Jack's new member profile in the December 1984



Jack Visser at 2010 Concurrent Conventions

National Amateur noted he "recently resumed the hobby more actively, increasing his inventory of old type and equipment." His first NAPA piece appeared in the May 1985 bundle: "I want at least to show my good faith before showing my face at the upcoming convention. To this end I am running thru the copier some of my original letterpress jobs," including bookmarks and a broadside.

He attended the 1985 convention in Canton, Ohio, but did not make it to another one until NAPA returned to Canton in 1992. He would attend 15 more between 1994 and 2015.

He accepted appointment as NAPA's manuscript manager in 1990 and served in that post for five years. He took a year off, then was elected to a two year term as secretary-treasurer (1996-98). His next office was a three year term as executive judge (2001-04).

He produced his first titled publication, *The Visitor*, in August 1994. Originally intended to be letterpress-printed, he ended up setting the text using a word processor, printing it on a copier, then adding ornaments and a handset acrostic on his 8 by 12 C&P press. He completed three more copier/letterpress issues during 1995. After a 2½ year gap, he published three more issues in 1998 (copier only).

In "visit five" he noted how his secretary-treasurer duties caused him to reflect on his place in the hobby. "I have heard from interested inactives who themselves feel no urge to write for publication. I can understand that. It does take a certain passion which, after a lifetime of bulletins, newsletters, papers, theses, and hom-

ilies, I myself seem to be lacking. I feel no great summons, no compelling subject, But I don't want to give it up yet ... My hobby is letterpress, and my enjoyment is in playing with type and turning out little stuff like cards, tickets, stationery, bookmarks, calendars."

Visit seven (July 1998) reported a move of both residence in Cadiz and shop in Flushing to Wooster, and the need to substantially downsize, including his printing equipment and collection of amateur journals. After another two year break, he averaged about one issue per year between 2001 and 2008 (ten issues total), including one printed fully by letterpress (no. 12, autumn 2004). Also during this period he wrote about a fire that significantly damaged his print shop; see "Back From the Blaze" following this article.

Jack attended the American APA convention in Mount Vernon, Ohio in 1997 and was persuaded to join. He maintained his AAPA membership, but his activity was nearly all directed at NAPA. He joined The Fossils in 2009.

Jack was elected NAPA president at the 2008 convention. In summarizing his first term for the December 2009 *National Amateur*, Guy Miller wrote,

History should record that newly elected President Jack Visser did not hit the ground running. Rather, it was more like jumping hurdles; for, he barely had the chance to grab his track shoes before he was hit by the need to make a series of decisions. ... He very soon discovered that meeting the various pressing challenges would require a different course. The fact that he met them "nimble and quickly" confirmed him as a

first degree problem solver with the readiness to reach out for counsel.

The publicity chair's request for additional funds was complicated by a lack of separate budget for publicity. E-mail messages totaling 17 pages passed among the officers before the issue was resolved. At nearly the same time, the mailing manager needed to be replaced. The next problem: after Denver area members withdrew, he had to find new hosts for the 2009 convention. (Parkersburg, West Virginia stepped forward.) A lack of laureate entries was dealt with, and the critics board chair replaced. Guy closed his history:

Well, no one can disagree that President Visser, despite his desire to be merely a facilitator, has proved that, in meeting emergencies, he can be both nimble and quick. Maybe he didn't have to jump over any candle stick during his first term; but, as "they" say, "Stay tuned." We'll see about his second term as he enters an arena already aglow with sparks of debate over proposed constitutional changes, discussions which he will be called upon to referee. We'll give you odds that he will clear the hoops.

The next year's historian, Alice Brosey, reported a different rhythm to Jack's second term:

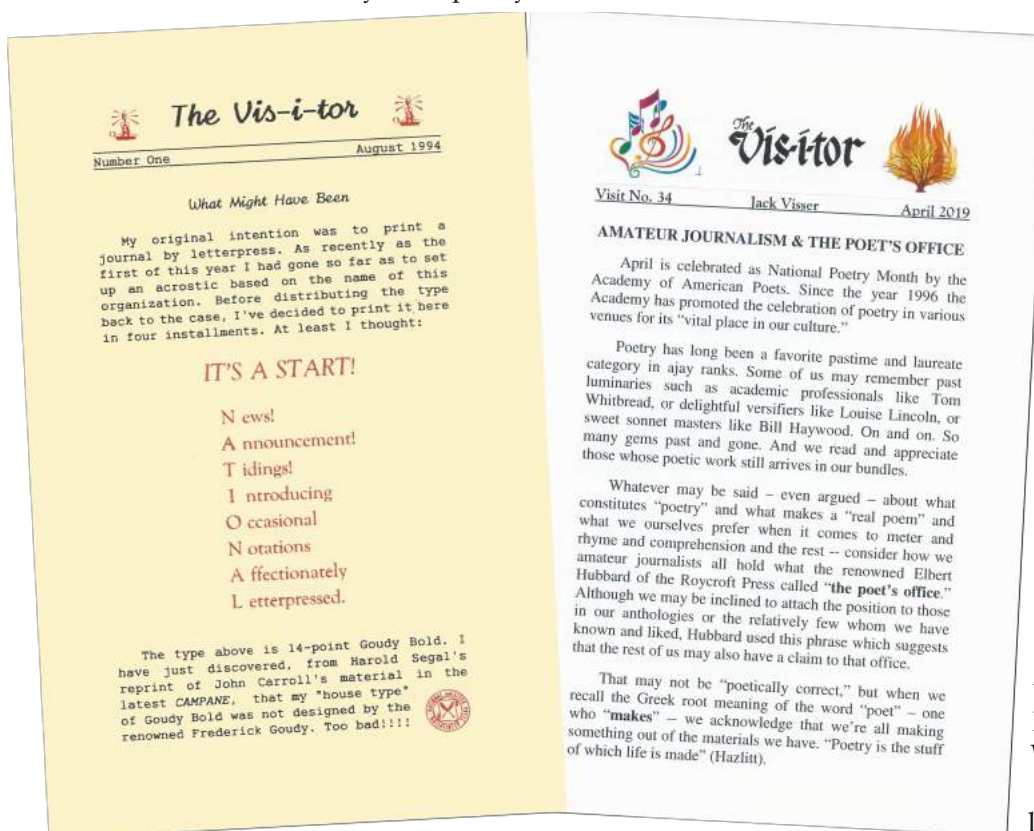
In comparison to President Visser's first term in office, there were no major hurdles at the beginning of his term. Instead, the excitement came toward the end of his term, in the form of the acquisition of parts of Daniel Graham's estate and the planning for the first convention held in conjunction with the American Amateur Press Association.

Alice noted the recovery of the Graham materials, "led to never before seen levels of cooperation between NAPA, The Fossils, and AAPA."

After two years as president, Jack was elected to a term as executive judge (2010-13). During those three years he produced another four issues of *Vis-i-tor*, but only one over the next three years.

He returned to the NAPA bundle in October 2016 with news of more moves within Ohio — first from Wooster back to Cadiz, and then to London. "In recent years I sold off my 8x12 C&P Old Style press when departing Wooster, and then leaving behind my 6½ x 10 Pilot press when leaving Cadiz for London. I am now down to the 5x8 Kelsey Excelsior press with which I began my letterpress hobby pilgrimage in the basement of a Wheeling, WV family home in 1942."

In that issue and the next six, published in consecutive months, he offered



First and last issues of *The Vis-i-tor*

“bits of correspondence with AJ acquaintances from years gone by.” In the February 2017 issue he noted that he was considering placing his type with other hobby printers. “But my son John thinks his son JB (5) may like it all some day, and I can only say ‘Good luck with that!’ “

According to his obituary, Jack “died Saturday, April 7, 2019 before his Lord and Savior in worship, immediately after receiving Holy Communion elements at First Presbyterian Church in London, Ohio.” He had already prepared the 34th *Vis-i-tor*, which appeared in the April NAPA bundle. ♦

From The Vis-i-tor No. 16, Spring 2007

Back From the Blaze

by Jack Visser

THE SCENE will not be forgotten: Tongues of flames leaping furiously above the roof of the barn against the darkness of an early October morning. Our barn was home to my hobby print shop. An arson’s ignition at the next door garage spread the fire to our structure before the firemen realized what had happened. It could have been totally spared if they had only sized up the situation and hosed a protective wall between the two buildings. As of this writing, nearly half a year later, the outside walls have been rebuilt, the electric has just been restored, the inside has been drywalled, and the remaining mess awaits cleanup and repair.

At the risk of playing printer-polyanna: What good can come out of such an apparent disaster as this Big Bad Blaze?

1. The Blaze has been an enormous help to the downsizing which I should be doing at this stage anyway. The cherished Addressograph-Graphotype, not used for years but held close for making more of those World War II vintage dog tags, was the first to go to the salvage yard. Other less cumbersome pieces found themselves consigned to either the first or second dumpster. And then, do I really need to make any more rubber stamps? No. Do I really need to replenish my stock of colored foils so as to hot-stamp any more matchbooks or calendars? Obviously not.

2. The Blaze has enabled me to focus on the areas I am most interested in pursuing. The “less” of unnecessary items has opened up “more” room for two letterpress collections in particular: my alluring cuts (which don’t take up a lot of room); & my display of Bible leaves, from the incunabula period with hand-colored Latin initials, through

stages of English Bible translation stretching from Tyndale (first Bible in English, 1538) through Geneva (“Bible of the Pilgrims,” 1560) and on to Aitken (“Bible of the Revolution,” 1782).

3. At the same time, lest the foregoing alternative purchases suggest that my consumerist instinct has simply been reborn and redirected, The Blaze has warmed my sense of priority that man does not live by lead alone. Even the impressive bundle-generated journals mean less to me than the acquaintance with their authors and publishers.

4. Among the many ways to spell relief include the loss of shelves and stacks of paper which continually aggravated my sense of guilt and dereliction for never calling on those waiting sheets and tenderly kissing them with my handset type.

5. Not getting around town like we used to, the Blaze got me out to make contacts I would not otherwise have made. Starting with the firemen, police, and investigators in the early hours, and insurance adjuster in the weeks following, I have met and visited with neighbors whom I otherwise would perhaps never been seen or known. Granted that their appearances may have been motivated more by curiosity than compassion, it is nonetheless valuable to expand one’s village.

6. The Blaze has reminded me how very gracious and generous our fellow amateur printers are. Although I did not publicize my loss, the few who did come to learn of it were unfailingly solicitous and thoughtful and anxious to replace whatever losses they might be able to do. Those of you who didn’t know about it would do the same. Thank you! If, as it is said, printers have ink in their blood, it’s no less true that their veins have also “the milk of kindness.”

7. The Blaze provides grist for my mill. We aays, many of us, are always faced with the question of what to write. My present topic hopefully falls into the category of a worthwhile subject with relevance to our craft. More importantly, it almost demands some treatment from me for therapeutic reasons. We work out our traumas by the age-old pattern of naming them, claiming them, and taming them as we write about them. And then yes, I do like to continue to “visit” every now and then.

8. In one of those sweet twists of adversity, our old 19th century barn has not only been repaired and restored; it is in far better condition than it ever was. What we discovered in the aftermath of the Blaze was that there were no upright posts in place to hold up the two-story end of the structure. The old oak supports had been rotted out over the years and none of them even touched the floor. We stood there amazed that the type-laden cases and cast iron presses on the second floor had not already come crashing down upon the printer’s saw and paper drill and all the other stuff below. I stop short of giving thanks for the arsonist, but how would we ever have known of the potential collapse had it not been for the revealing fire?

9. The Blaze has conveniently lent itself to the compilation of a “Top 10” list – with one to go:

10. Finally, then, I’ve got some stuff to take to the convention auction! Not just the cheap rejects I’ve been accused of sneaking onto the auction table. I omit things damaged beyond repair, but I include from the inventory on my insurance “Loss Worksheet” some items I have no future need for and that are either minimally damaged or might be easily fixed and put to good use.

The more I process my “loss” from the “Big Bad Blaze,” the more aware I have become of the positive – and so to think of it as the Big Beneficial Blaze. What’s your silver lead lining? ♦

America's Adolescent Armchair Diplomats

by Brian Rouleau, Texas A&M University

IN MAY OF 1873, a Baltimore newspaper ran an editorial entitled "The Indians." It was a rather gory piece of prose. The writer decried the "treacheries, outrages, [and] murders" recently perpetrated by Modoc warriors. He then asked his readers to imagine women and children "lying lifeless and scalplless" and their settlements "burnt to the ground." Such scenery, it was said, "makes our blood boil, and our hearts cry for revenge." And so, the essay next asked, "are we, here in the East, to sit in our comfortable parlors and let our soldiers be slaughtered by savages?" "No!" went the defiant reply, which quickly took peace off the table. "The government has already spent millions of dollars in, we need not say, vain attempts to accomplish that object." The author instead suggested something far bloodier. "The only peace that can be made with Indians," his matter-of-fact proposal went, "is to exterminate the whole race." Then, and only then, would "our frontier settlers...have peace of mind in working their lands." The country could no longer allow its citizens "to be butchered in this way." Instead, as the entirely-capitalized final sentence screamed, U.S. authorities had to "EXTERMINATE THE INDIANS."

Prof. Brian Rouleau

BRIAN ROULEAU is an associate professor of History at Texas A&M University. He joined the faculty in 2010 after earning a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. In 2014 he published *With Sails Whitening Every Sea: Mariners and the Making of an American Maritime Empire*, a book exploring how America's commercial sailors affected foreign relations in the nation's earliest days. Research on a new book, tentatively titled *Empire's Nursery: Children's Literature and the Origins of the American Century*, took him to both the Library of Amateur Journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, to review their vast collections of nineteenth century amateur journals in order to understand young people's opinions on national ambitions and immigration. He spent a month of research at each.

This paper is taken from material he presented at the Society for the Historians of American Foreign Relations Annual Meeting, held in Washington, D.C., in June 2019. ♦

Such sentiments were, of course, common enough to periodicals that circulated in postbellum America. Far more curious, however, is the identity of the writer. For the person demanding this act of ferocious retribution was a teenage boy. He, and thousands more adolescents like him, were the editors of, contributors to, and audience for a sizable national network of so-called amateur newspapers. Printed with miniaturized toy presses on small pieces of paper, hundreds of thousands of these broadsheets circulated city-blocks, suburban neighborhoods, and rural townships throughout the Gilded Age United States. For historians, they collectively represent one of the few great and virtually untapped public spheres left to excavate. But even more tantalizingly, young people, typically ranging from ten to twenty years in age, controlled their content. Here lay the littlest republic of letters—a place its practitioners called "Amateurdom." Participants considered it a kind of collective enterprise, and as such, a means to foster a sense of national adolescent community through debate and dialogue.

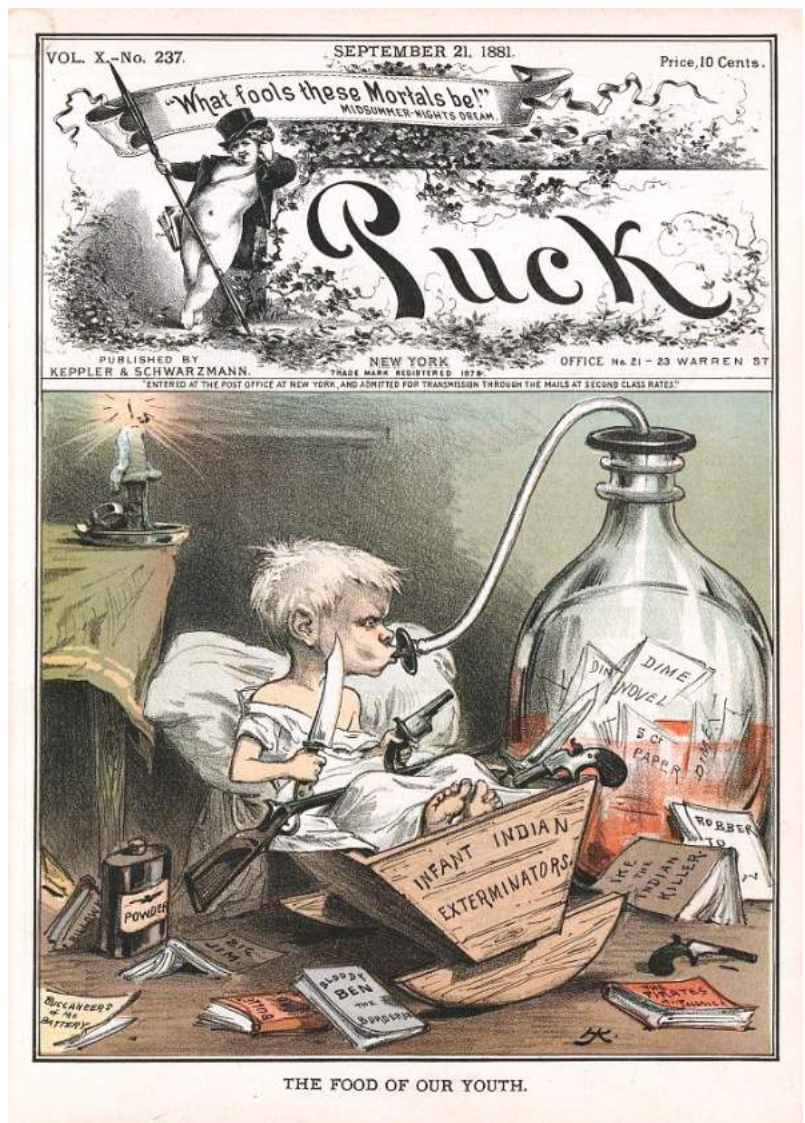
This essay is rooted in research at two of the major collections of amateur newspapers, held at the University of Wisconsin and the American Antiquarian Society. The paper investigates how amateurs, from the 1870s to the 1890s, worked to express a juvenile perspective on what were considered the pressing political issues of the day. What scholars are often conditioned to think of as implicitly "adult" affairs—such as military policy, electoral politics, or tariff schedules—in fact found vibrant expression within the pages of media produced by and for young people. And there was perhaps no single topic which seemed to generate more sustained interest amongst junior editorialists than American foreign relations, broadly construed. From Indian matters in the trans-Mississippi West to immigration and the War of 1898, youths around the country attempted to articulate a generationally distinct outlook on the United States and its relationship to the wider world. That vengeful young man from Baltimore by no means stood alone. Many children used tabletop presses to dress-rehearse their still-crystallizing perspectives on international affairs. In so doing, amateur papers allowed adolescents to display the very maturity and intellectual seriousness that developing discourses of childhood innocence and juvenile delinquency implicitly denied to the young.

When a Baltimore teen demanded the extermination of an entire people, he unwittingly demonstrated the ways in which imperialistic thinking about the

West (and beyond) was perpetuated across time. Looking at how and why such sentiments became popular among the later nineteenth century's adolescents can help us better understand the pervasiveness, power, and longevity of both America's settler colonial practices and its increasingly international outlook. Both were frames of reference or perspectives on the world that required "buy-in" on the part of youths in order to entrench what historians have called America's Gilded Age "global dawn." Amateur newspapers provide important insight into how and why a sizeable slice of juvenile America welcomed a muscular role for the United States along its expanding frontiers. To comprehend the country's embrace of international interventionism, we must attend to the attractiveness that such ideas had for those too young to enact policy but old enough to participate in a cultural process of consensus-building. Young people's agency was often expressed not necessarily by challenging their parents' pro-expansionary politics, but rather, in the reaffirmation (and thus propagation) of imperial power structures.

That process seemed to consist, in part, of printing breathless, blood-soaked coverage of settler colonial subjects within the pages of amateur papers. Such stories were not confined to any particular region or locale. Teenaged journalists in San Francisco who carped about "the utter stupidity of our dealings with the Indians" and demanded "a war of extermination" did not sound terribly different from their counterparts in Ohio, who decreed that the country should be "wiping out every red-skin possible." An Ithaca paper published a bit of propaganda in a poem titled "A Pioneer's Home," while another editor in Beloit, Wisconsin, accepted for publication short stories written by neighbors that featured white boys of "bone and muscle" who "conquered the Indian" by "gigantic blows" and rifle shots "between the eyes." The *Forest City Spark* denounced the "outrageous slaughter of whites in the far west" at the hands of "the red man," and "look[ed] forward to the time, not far distant, when the race shall be extinct."

Young writers often seemed to recycle elements of the dime-novel Westerns that dominated the Gilded Age's youth literary market. They marveled at the "overpowering hand of civilization" and remarked upon the "numerous evidences of cultivation, where a few centuries ago, the untutored savage held the ruling power." They celebrated the lives of those who "subdued the savage border to civilization" and proclaimed themselves "ready to reap the reward." There was boosterism which boasted about the "thundering tread of the advancing hosts of civilization" and the concomitant retreat of "wild beasts and wilder men." Others still heralded the "genius of the age" and the "onward



THE FOOD OF OUR YOUTH.

"The Food of Our Youth," Puck 10, No. 237 (Sept. 21, 1881): Many parents during the Gilded Age feared their children were being warped by the violence contained within the era's popular fiction. In this cover from Puck magazine, a small child has been transformed into a bloodthirsty "Infant Indian Exterminator" by dime novels. Amateur newspapers suggest that young people did often express anti-Indian and pro-imperial sentiment, but they did so in order to join "adult" political conversations regarding U.S. policy in the West.

march of progress" that transformed "a wilderness covered with wild grass" into "fruitful valleys surrendered to the peaceful conquest of the plowshare and sickle." It was common for amateurs to do as their elders did, abstracting a violent process of dispossession by deploying anodyne language to describe it. "Civilization," they said, "is the making of a land, the foundation of human happiness, and the means of turning forest lands into farms." Passive constructions did useful work by perpetuating a myth of national blamelessness. "Bands of wild savages," almost of their own volition, were said to have "marched off the field, one by one, to make room for civilization's progress."

Papers became particularly preoccupied with the

“problem” of indigenous resistance. Winona, Minnesota’s *The Idler* expressed exasperation with “the Indian department,” which had “effected no permanent cure” for the “atrocious outrages and barbarities” heaped upon “poor and defenseless settlers” by “depredating Indians.” The editor hectored those who defended the “noble red man”: if “the Indian ever possessed noble traits,” he “has irrevocably lost them.” It was obvious that “civilization is alien to his composition, the march of progress is not to his taste, and he can never feel anything but eternal enmity towards the caucasian race.” As a result, a “mild and amicable course” could never be successful. “There [was] but one recourse,” the article insisted, “and while it is severe, it must be used as a matter of self-protection.” The United States had to pursue a “war of extermination.” A St. Louis boy, meanwhile, averred that “the development of the country is a duty.” As such, anyone who “denounces our settlers, who are hastening this work, as persecutors of the Indian, is as idiotic as [they are] ignorant.” The writer then went on to express his disbelief that “there are those who, through a sickly sentimentality or a love of notoriety, prate about the wrongs” done to “the noble savage, who is, generally speaking, a filthy and degraded brute.” To those misguided philanthropists, he had a simple message: “this country is too valuable to humanity to be given up to grasshopper-hunting.” The country’s enemies were identified as “certain would-be orators, who utter much meaningless stuff about the condition of the Indian.” Or, as another youth plainly put it: “We do not grieve the fate of the Indian.”

The West was the clear focus of amateur authors who wished to weigh in on the exercise of American power during the 1870s and early 1880s. But, during the later 1880s and early 1890s—with the collapse of Indian military resistance and the Census Bureau’s “closure” of the frontier—the region simply lost some its attractiveness to authors and audiences

“Don’t Touch My Flag” (1898): Prints depicting the pugnacious patriotism of American boys circulated during the Spanish-American War. A similar militaristic spirit appeared in the amateur press, with juvenile editors almost universally lining up behind the war effort.



alike. Young writers now seized upon issues like immigration and foreign interventionism as fit subjects for discussion. Much of their thinking about the efficacy of belligerence in the West seems to have found applicability as the adolescent gaze grew to encompass more of the world. Amateurdom’s embrace of an activist state along the trans-Mississippi frontier cleared the rhetorical path for a similar flexing of national muscle in new contexts. On immigration, for example, most papers toed a hard line. “America for Americans” cried one boy, who complained that “our country is made the abode of foreign criminals, the lowest and vilest people that debase this fair world.” His counterpart in Connecticut believed that “if all emigration to the United States was stopped the nation would be benefited greatly,” while another called immigrants “creatures” who threatened “the utter destruction of law and order.”

The same casual calls to genocidal policy characterizing editorial comment on the West during the 1870s and 1880s also found a new home overseas. Or, as a New Hampshire novice reflected, “the mission of our race is evident—to civilize, Christianize, and give a universal language to the world.” Cuba and the Philippines therefore presented particularly convenient opportunities for adolescents to demonstrate their commitment to the exercise of American power abroad. Before the War of 1898 began, a number of papers called for intervention as an act of hemispheric charity. As had been their wont in the West, kids usually demanded to know why the government dragged its feet in chastising malefactors. “What is this ‘glorious land of the free’ coming to,” asked an 1896 editorial, “when it will not recognize those who are oppressed [and] tyrannized by a monarchical government?” But after the destruction of the *Maine* in February of 1898 and the commencement of hostilities two months later junior jingoes lined up behind the effort. “War!! Barbarous Spain! Inhuman Brutes! United States Will Wipe Them Off the Earth!” one representative headline read. With most too young to serve in the armed forces, adolescents instead chose to print pieces of serial fiction set in Caribbean battlefields. Short stories with titles like “Darkest Cuba” and “How Walter Saved the Lone Star” allowed young people to enjoy vicarious triumphs in a war they claimed credit for having helped win. Indeed, the latter story ends with a supplicant Cuban rebel gratefully gripping the hand of the teen-aged Walter Clyde to declare that “we owe our victories to that brave American lad.”

Bombast more generally, of course, was common enough to Gilded Age reflections regarding the United States and the world. Young people indulged in it no less than their parents, and consequently, often came across as juvenile Josiah Strongs or little Albert

Beveridges, braying about America's global mission. But this is not to say that young and old came to such ideological convergence for the same reasons. The swaggering nationalism of junior journalists traced its origins, in part, to the particular problems of adolescence. By the later nineteenth century, the industrialized world had become a thoroughly age-graded hierarchy. Youth political activism, broadly recognized as legitimate even a few years earlier by the Civil War generation, was now being played down as potentially pernicious. Ideas stressing the inherently innocent (and thus apolitical) nature of childhood only gained broader social acceptance as educational institutions expanded in scope and further forestalled children's maturation. For middle-class offspring, childhood dependency became a prolonged affair as apprenticeships and other forms of employment were closed off to them. This proved vexing for more than a few such kids, and Amateurdom became an outlet by which they might vent their frustration. The numerous amateur editorials decrying compulsory education statutes as a species of slavery are revealing.

Young citizens felt they had been confined—legally and institutionally—to a state of irrelevancy. Hence one adolescent's assertion that "boys and young men [are] systematically suppressed" and another's gripe that "the women and the darkies" were not "half so badly used as the boys." As an Illinois paper wept, "to be a boy is to be somebody without a right in the world." Amateurdom therefore possessed obvious appeal to self-pitying adolescents. It encouraged free expression amongst people deeply resentful of society's failure to treat them with the seriousness they thought suitable. Indeed, one particularly poetic youth forged an explicit link between an earlier abolitionist movement and his hobby press. In his mind, it represented "the emancipation of boyhood from the fetters of sixty centuries." Thus the connection between the regular appearance, in amateur papers, of both complaints about youth disempowerment and an aggressive global posture for the United States hardly seems coincidental. Fantasies of personal and national power intertwined for many young people. At a moment in time when both law and culture increasingly prescribed that teenagers be muzzled, adolescents sought to speak up.

But for those making the case for the social acceptability of civically-engaged children, there was still the problem of evidence. Young people needed to demonstrate their aptitude in "adult" affairs. Based on how common commentary about the country's foreign relations was within the pages of amateur papers, it would appear that youths found diplomatic dealings to be an ideal proving ground. As one editor said about the subject: "since it is so important that our American youth be properly instructed in their duties, what more

appropriate place can be found for discussing these matters than in their publications 'of boys, for boys, by boys.'" The irony is that in a medium virtually unmediated by adult input, young people still expressed a desire to "sound" more grown up. This led them to recapitulate imperial rhetoric considered a hallmark of sophistication. Here was yet another means by which a messianic mentality regarding America's role in world affairs managed to cross over from one generation to the next.

Amateurdom's young participants, ultimately, created a world of aspirational adulthood and a longed-for veneer of professionalism. Adolescents deployed language about America's role in both the West and the wider world as a sort of currency, a way of demonstrating one's seriousness, one's credentials, one's ability to speak and act as a mature and deliberative person, as opposed to an infantile romantic. Such posturing signaled to other readers that one had transcended the childish, sophomoric, or jejune. Hence one Massachusetts-based teenaged editor's solicitation of articles from neighborhood kids with the promise that "young writers will find *Youth*," his amateur paper, "a good medium through which to express their thoughts. Articles must be original and free from slang and vulgarity to insure insertion." And how entirely appropriate, then, that the very first article provided to fulfill that request was entitled "Frontier Perils," lamented "peskey red skins" who were "a terror and a scourge to innocent frontier settlers," and resolved that every one of those "merciless foes" be summarily "shot or hanged." If young writers saw the amateur press as a forum through which they might share their still-crystallizing principles and thus demonstrate their credentials as budding adults and mature writers, it seems significant that they chose to do so by engaging with the sorts of settler colonial tropes and expansionist politics that saturated the culture surrounding them.

Not all amateurs, of course, expressed hostility to Indians, immigrants, and other groups. But for those who did, voicing such opinions was more than children's rote recitation of what they had read someplace else. It was, instead, a political claim unto itself. Young people approached imperial discourse as a tool, one they might use to access the same power, privilege, and prestige that expansionist heroics seemed to confer upon their elders. When historian Frederick Jackson Turner famously called the frontier "a magic fountain of youth in which America continually bathed and was rejuvenated," he was not referring to actual youths. But these were prescient words all the same. For as it turned out, the country's younger generations continued to breathe new life into the West (and the "greater West" of global empire) once they found rich significance for themselves in its rhetoric and representations. ♦

Grateful to Fellow Fossils

by Ken Faig, Jr.

I HAVE FOSSILS David Tribby and Robert Lichtman to thank for the two essays on Lovecraftian topics that follow. David generously shared with me photographs of pages from the John Heins January 1922 *National Amateur* he acquired recently. The photographs resolved for me the longstanding question of which of Lovecraft's writings won NAPA's essay honorable mention for 1920-21.

The trigger for the second essay was an article in Fossil Robert Lichtman's always-engaging fanzine *Trap Door*. Robert is the long-serving secretary-treasurer of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA), to which I belonged in 1976-1991. I should mention that both essays appeared in my own zine *Ken's Kit and Kaboodle* in the May Eve 2019 mailing of the Esoteric Order of Dagon (EOD) amateur press association, a specialty APA devoted to H. P. Lovecraft and associated topics. I suspect that few Fossils will have seen these essays before. The EOD is a quarterly paper-based APA with a total membership of thirty.

What Lovecraft essay won NAPA's 1920-21 Honorable Mention?

I raised this question in my essay "The Unknown Lovecraft II: The Reluctant Laureate," first circulated in the EOD's Lammas 2006 mailing and reprinted in my collection *The Unknown Lovecraft* (Hippocampus Press, 2009). There were actually two rival editions of *The National Amateur* (NA) dated January 1922, one edited by the outgoing official editor John Milton Heins and one by the incoming official edition William (Bill) Dowdell.

Until very recently, I had had no access to Heins's edition of the January 1922 NA. However, in 2018 Fossils Official Editor David Tribby acquired at auction a bound set of NA formerly owned by Gary Bossler, and therein was the Heins-edited January 1922 NA. The answer to the question proved to be "The Street," whose appearance in the January 1922 NA is duly noted as item I-B-i-59(b) in Joshi's *H. P. Lovecraft: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (University of Tampa Press, 2009), p. 84. "The Street" had originally appeared in Horace Lawson's amateur magazine *The Wolverine* (no. 8) for December 1920 [item I-B-i-59(a) in Joshi's bibliography].

One might debate whether "The Street" was properly classified as an essay, a sketch, or a story, but Lawson entered it in NAPA's essay competition for that year, which was distinguished by medals for the winners financed by a campaign led by 1921-22 official editor Heins. The whole matter got very tangled be-

cause Lovecraft himself had only recently rejoined NAPA (of which he became president in November 1922, after the resignation of Bill Dowdell) and had not himself contributed to the medal fund. Could he in good conscience accept his honorable mention medal for the NAPA essay competition, when his primary loyalty remained with the Hoffman-Daas faction of the United (UAPA)? George Julian Houtain's new wife E. Dorothy (Grant) McLaughlin, formerly Mrs. David McLaughlin, had been elected NAPA president for the 1921-22 term, and she and her husband were pressing hard for activity by NAPA members. In addition, Houtain himself had been paying Lovecraft \$5 per installment for the serial "Herbert West—Reanimator," which ran in his professional magazine *Home Brew* in six installments from January to June 1922.

There were other disputes between Official Editor Heins and President Houtain that resulted in Heins's resignation (or dismissal) at the end of 1921. President Houtain appointed Bill Dowdell to serve as official editor to replace Heins, and Dowdell was later rewarded with the NAPA presidency at the July 1922 convention. One consequence of these disputes was two competing editions of NA for January 1922, one edited by Heins and the other by his appointed successor Dowdell. Only Heins's edition carried the essay honorable mention winner "The Street" on pp. 25 to 27 (actually the first, second, and third pages of the number, wherein pages were numbered from the start of the volume). George Douglas of the San Francisco *Bulletin* had served as judge of the essay competition, and rendered his verdict to 1920-21 president Anthony F. Moitoret by letter dated June 27, 1921. The laureate winner was James F. Morton's essay "To Be Considered," which both Heins and Dowdell printed in their competing January 1922 NAs (Morton's essay is at p. 25 in Heins's edition). Lovecraft's honorable mention essay "The Street" appeared only in Heins's January 1922 NA.

Under the common title "Essay Medals," Heins printed the following communications from the essay winners—laureate and honorable mention—on p. 27 in his January 1922 NA:

New York City,
Oct. 30, 1921.

My Dear John:—

I am glad to acknowledge receipt of the medal for Essay Laureateship, which your unwearied energy and unbounded faith and enthusiasm has [sic] made possible as a permanent memento [sic] of the honor. The custom of giving medals should add to the dignity of

the Laureateships, and should stimulate the members to put forth their best efforts in the contests.

Fraternally yours,
JAMES F. MORTON JR.

598 Angell St., Providence,
November 4, 1921.

My dear Mr. Heins:—

Permit me to thank you most sincerely for the attractive silver medal which your Association has been so kind as to award me. The honourable mention is as gratifying as any ordinary laureateship, since my superior is less a person than James F. Morton, Jr. The idea of the medals, for which I believe your Association is indebted to you alone, is certainly a most desirable one; since it stimulates in the contests a keen interest otherwise lacking. I regret that my prime allegiance to the United Association forbade me to contribute to your medal fund in these lean times, but am sure you can appreciate the principle involved. If you ever join the United and start such a fund, you may depend upon my fullest co-operation!

It was not without a qualm of conscience that I accepted the medal when informed of it by Mr. Houtain—it seemed to some degree un-ethical to step into another Association[,] grab a valuable [sic] prize, and then step out again with only a brief word of thanks. My qualms were overruled, however, and I now tender my thanks with as much contrition as the occasion demands.

Thanking you again—both you and your association, in fact—and assuring [sic] you to have any part of this letter published if you so choose, Believe me.

Most sincerely yours,
H. P. LOVECRAFT

The ambivalence of Lovecraft's acceptance of the essay honorable mention medal for "The Street" did not go unnoticed by President Houtain, her husband, or their supporters in NAPA. So rancorous did the disputes between former editor Heins and the Houtains become that they threatened NAPA's forthcoming July 1922 convention. So, the Houtains and Heins and his father (Charles W. Heins) finally came to a settlement to resolve their disputes on June 15, 1922. The remaining issues in dispute were referred to A. M. Adams, as referee. Adams found that Heins had resigned (not been dismissed) as official editor, and that he had waived his claim to \$25 for the January 1922 *NA*. In the matter of Lovecraft's essay honorable mention award, Adams ruled:

(3) In the matter of the disputed Essay Laureate award, I find that the award of a judge, once announced, is unassailable, and that Howard Lovecraft is therefore entitled to Honorable Mention. [*The Unknown Lovecraft* 125]

As far I am aware, Lovecraft continued in possession of his silver honorable mention medal for "The

Street." If Lovecraft's silver medal survives, I do not know where it is today. If in fact Lovecraft did depart the NAPA ranks after writing his acceptance letter to John Milton Heins on Nov. 4, 1921, he rejoined in time to become president by appointment of the executive judges on Nov. 30, 1922, following the resignation of Bill Dowdell. James F. Morton was the leading light of the 1922-23 board of executive judges, and perhaps he intended the appointment as consolation for Lovecraft, whose supporters had been ousted from office in the Hoffman-Daas United in that summer's election.

Lovecraft dutifully served the National as interim president in 1922-23, but declined Edward H. Cole's proposal that he become a candidate for a full term as president in 1923-24. He did serve as an executive judge for the 1923-24 fiscal year—an office traditionally tendered to immediate past presidents. Lovecraft's ticket was returned to office in the elections of the Hoffman-Daas United in the summer of 1923, but the association never recovered its former vigor. Alma Sanger, treasurer during the 1922-23 administration, refused to turn over association funds to her successor. Lovecraft and then both Lovecraft and his wife, the former Sonia H. Greene, labored mightily to keep the Hoffman-Daas United going in 1923-25, and turned the association over to an official board led by Edgar J. Davis for the 1925-26 term. However, the Hoffman-Daas United produced only a few more thin *UAs* and lapsed into oblivion after holding no elections for 1926-27 officers. The diminished amateur activity of the later 1920s could barely support two associations—the National and the Erford-Noel United. For a time, Charles W. Smith's *The Tryout* was the only regularly published paper for the National, and only four persons attended NAPA's convention in Niagara Falls in 1928.

Given the magnitude of Lovecraft's eventual service to NAPA—as president in 1922-23, executive judge in 1923-24, board of critics member in 1931-33, board of critics chair in 1933-35, and executive judge in 1935-36—I think he was fully entitled to the honorable mention silver medal which he received for "The Street." That this rather minor piece of work was the subject of such an intensive dispute only goes to attest to the rancorous divisions that wracked the amateur journalism hobby in the early 1920s. Despite the declining activity of the later 1920s, the disputes remained. The 1930 Boston NAPA convention attended by Lovecraft signaled a revival of interest, in which he generously participated. Rancorous disputes did not end; Lovecraft labored hard as an executive judge in 1935-36 to craft resolutions for some of the worst of them. In the end, it was love for printing and for the printed word which held the hobby together to enjoy a real renaissance in the 1940s. By that time, of course, Lovecraft was no longer around to witness the fruits of his labors.

I am indebted to Editor David Tribby for making the material in John Heins's January 1922 *NA* available to me. A question that puzzled me for more than a decade has finally been resolved.

Is there an item between Stickney's *HPL* and Shepherd's *History of the Necronomicon* in S. T. Joshi's *H. P. Lovecraft: A Comprehensive Bibliography*?

August Derleth formulated the plan of publishing a memorial collection of Lovecraft's fiction soon after the author's death, and was notably hostile to enterprises he perceived as infringing upon his turf. Stickney published but twenty-five copies of *HPL*, a tiny collection of the author's poetry, which he gave away to subscribers of his magazine the *Amateur Correspondent*. Nevertheless, he received a cease-and-desist letter from Derleth. I don't know whether Shepherd might have received the same for his effort. Writing to Robert H. Barlow after Derleth and Wandrei visited him in Providence in 1938, Lovecraft's executor Albert A. Baker cast scorn upon Barlow's edition of Lovecraft's *The Notes and Commonplace Book* (Futile Press, 1938), noting that Barlow had sent Mrs. Gamwell only a nominal ten dollar payment in respect of its publication.

The December 2018 edition (no. 34) of Robert Lichtman's *Trap Door* contains an article, "The FAPA Project," by Bob Silverberg in which Silverberg asserts that the first FAPA mailing (dated Fall 1937) contained a "small booklet of poems" by Lovecraft entitled *Science Fiction Bard*, published by Donald Wollheim. Maybe by appearing under the blanket of the FAPA mailing, this small publication escaped the notice of Derleth.

But don't ask Bob Silverberg for a copy of *Science Fiction Bard*—at a 2017 eBay auction, he was outbid for the first two FAPA mailings (dated fall and winter 1937) from the collection of Dan McPhail. Silverberg had filed a bid of \$1800 for the lot, and the winning bid was \$1825.

Assuming that *Science Fiction Bard* is a legitimate primary publication of Lovecraft's work, I wonder what asking price a dealer like Lloyd Currey might place upon it. In the 2009 edition of Joshi's bibliography, there were just fourteen primary publications preceding *The Outsider and Others* (Arkham House, 1939). Maybe there are fifteen.

I believe that Necronomicon Press published facsimile editions of both Shepherd's *History of the Necronomicon* and Barlow's *The Notes and Commonplace Book*. If he could get hold of copies to reproduce, I bet that Marc Michaud could make a go of a facsimile reprint of Stickney's *HPL* and Wollheim's *Science Fiction Bard*. Maybe Bill Evans's edition of *Fungi from Yuggoth* (FAPA, 1943) could be included for good measure.

P.S. In his article, Silverberg also mentions a Lovecraft tribute in the second (winter 1937) FAPA mailing, but does not specify the publisher or title. ♦

LAJ Endowment 2018 Activity

by Dave Tribby

IN MAY, the University of Wisconsin Foundation released its annual Endowment Report describing the performance of all endowed funds, including the Leland M. Hawes Jr. Fund for the Library of Amateur Journalism (LAJ). 2018 was the second full year of operations since the Fund was established by donations from The Fossils, the American Amateur Press Association, the National Amateur Press Association, and individual amateur journalists. The fund supports the ongoing work of the LAJ, the largest collection of amateur journals in the world. It is located in the Special Collections department at Memorial Library on the UW-Madison campus. Here is the financial statement for the Fund from the Foundation report:

Leland M. Hawes, Jr. Fund for the Library of Amateur Journalism

JANUARY 1, 2018, THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2018

Beginning Endowment Market Value (1/1/18)	\$17,263.30
<i>Additions to Endowment</i>	
Gift Additions	\$1,150.00
Reinvested Income	\$0.00
Other Additions (includes stock gifts)	\$970.35
<i>Allocated Investment Return</i>	-\$656.17
<i>Deductions from Endowment</i>	
Spend Plan Allocation	-\$753.40
Institutional Advancement Fee	-\$176.73
Other Deductions	\$0.00
Ending Endowment Market Value (12/31/18)	\$17,797.35
End-of-Year Endowment Book Value (12/31/18)	\$17,984.72
Lifetime Spend Plan Allocation (12/31/18)	\$1,552.72

The value of the Fund's principal ("Market Value") grew modestly during 2018, from \$17,263.30 on January 1 to \$17,797.35 on December 31. Income included \$2,120.35 in cash and stock donations. Due to poor fourth quarter performance in equity markets, the 2018 investment return was negative: -\$656.17. This -3.7% performance for the year contrasts with an average annual return of 6.2% over the last three years and 7.3% over ten years.

During 2018, \$753.40 from the Fund (4.5% allocation) was spent to support the LAJ, mainly to pay student workers for ongoing cataloging. (See "Library of Amateur Journalism Update" by Robin Rider in last October's issue of *THE FOSSIL*.) In addition, the Fund was assessed \$176.73 (1%) to support the Foundation.

A total of \$17,984.72 has been donated to the Fund ("Book Value") through the end of 2018. The Fund has provided \$1,552.72 to support the LAJ since 2016. ♦

Following Up

by Dave Tribby

THIS ISSUE'S COLUMN allows me to follow up on articles from recent issues of THE FOSSIL.

Former Fossil Sean Donelly, who keeps up with THE FOSSIL online, recently sent a message: "... the April 2019 [issue] is especially interesting because of the Wilson Shepherd feature. I've looked for and collected his publications for years, gathering whatever information I could about them. I have a few publications not mentioned in the new FOSSIL, so I'm sending along my list in case you'd like to share it." Here is Sean's list:

The American Free Press (edited and published by WHS)

No. 1, September 1937

No. 2, November 1937

No. 3, December 1, 1937

No. 4, January-February 1939

No. 5, no date ["Special Combination Issue" with *The Rebel*, No. 4]

Background by H. P. Lovecraft (printed by WHS with Donald A. Wollheim)

Broadside issued as Vol. 47, No. 1 of *The Lovecrafter*

Fanciful Tales (edited by WHS with Donald A. Wollheim)

Fall 1936

A History of the Necronomicon by H. P. Lovecraft (printed and published by WHS)

One-shot publication, 1937

The International Science Fiction Guild's Bulletin (edited and published by WHS)

No. 1, May 1934

The Lovecraft Collector (printed for Ray H. Zorn)

No. 1, January 1949

No. 2, May 1949

No. 3, October 1949

The Phantagraph (co-editor and publisher with Donald A. Wollheim)

Vol. 4, No. 1, July-August 1935

Vol. 4, No. 2, November-December 1935

Vol. 4, No. 3, February 1936

Vol. 4, No. 4, July 1936

Vol. 4, No. 5, August 1936

Vol. 4, No. 6, September 1936

Vol. 5, No. 1, October 1936

The Rebel (edited and published by WHS)

No. 1, March 1937

No. 2, May 1937

No. 3, September 1937

No. 4, no date ["Special Combination Issue" with *The American Free Press*, No. 5]

The Recruiter (edited and published by WHS)

No. 1, March 1939

No. 2, August 1939

The United Veteran (edited and published by WHS)

No. 1, no date

No. 2, January 1947

No. 3, no date

No. 4, July-August 1947

The American Free Press, *A History of the Necronomicon*, *The Rebel*, and *The Recruiter* were titles mentioned in the April issue as ones WHS circulated within AAPA. *The Phantagraph* was in AAPA's bundles, but also circulated to science fiction fans outside of amateur journalism. Does anyone know more about the other titles?

I asked Fossil Robert Lichtman, who has been involved with the Fantasy Amateur Press Association for many years, if he could add any information about Wilson Shepherd and his co-publisher Donald A. Wollheim, one of FAPA's founders. Here is his reply:

I read John Shepherd's article with interest—and once I was done realized there wasn't anything specific about Wollheim I could write for THE FOSSIL about his association with Wilson H. Shepherd. But I did learn that he (Wilson) had a history of activity in proto-SF fandom dating back to 1934. This is outlined in Chapter VII of Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*, a history of SF fandom in the years leading up to 1939.

What's revealed here is that as early as May 1934, when he was just 16 years old, Wilson started an ambitiously-named SF club and published a half-size 4-page hectographed bulletin announcing its formation. Sam outlines Wilson's fan activities prior to what Ken Faig mentioned, and it's somewhat fascinating reading (although not helped by Sam's turgid writing style). The name of this publication was *International Science Fiction Guild's Bulletin*. It ran for five issues in 1934-35, all hectographed in the same format. It then changed its name to *Terrestrial Fantascience Guild* and ran for another three issues, the final one under that name being published in May 1935. (The penultimate issue differed in format from the others, being full-size and mimeographed.) After that it changed its name again, to *The Phantagraph*, which was published through 1946 with over 60 issues. However, only the first issue was edited by Shepherd—all the others were Wollheim's work. I have a handful of those, including the first issue produced after Shepherd bowed out, and I have a copy of *Fanciful Tales of Time and Space*, his and Wollheim's 1936 collaboration.

The full text of *The Immortal Storm* is available online in the Internet Archive. You can use this shortened link to reach it; chapter VII begins on page number 27: <https://tinyurl.com/y592g69a>

