

The Fossil

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President's Message

Encountering Skeletal Remains

by David Goudsward

GUY MILLER'S President Report in FOSSIL #344 (April 2010) includes a cautionary note: "As a fan and student of Lovecraft, the editor has striven to avoid making THE FOSSIL a journal of Lovecraft studies—for the big tree of the amateur journalism hobby is a far richer domain than the realm of any single participant—however famous."



President David Goudsward

I agree, even if I am the most serious offender. In my defense, I came into AJ from Lovecraft studies, so it really is a strength of mine. Nonetheless, I plan to scale back my Lovecraft articles. Having said that, my next book is due on Lovecraft and is peppered with amateur press-associated material. This issue, being as close to Halloween as it is, begs for an exception to the rule I just made up. It is the story of Lovecraft's encounters with human skeletal remains. The Old Gent would have seen Native American remains; We know he visited museums with significant anthropological collections (New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C., at least) where human remains were displayed before the public in a cavalier manner. But there are at least three instances where Lovecraft was able to touch mortal remains of centuries past.

So, sit close to the fire, campers, and I will tell you the story of **The Skulls of H. P. Lovecraft**.

Skull #1: Newburyport, Massachusetts

In July 1933, Helen Sully of Auburn, California, arrived in Providence on an adventure exploring the East Coast. Her mother was a friend of Clark Ashton Smith, and Smith had suggested Helen look up his friend and correspondent Lovecraft when she reached Providence. Lovecraft set her up at a boarding house across from his home. The two embarked upon one of Lovecraft's

(in)famous whirlwind tours of Providence and Newburyport. Sully recalled visiting a graveyard where he explained the various styles of the carvings. Considering he had gleefully told her ghost stories at midnight in St. John's Churchyard until she fled in tears, her willingness to travel after that with him is courageous.

After departing Providence, perhaps with a sigh of relief, Helen Sully continued exploring on her own. Lovecraft's letter to her, dated September 27, discusses details about the subsequent visit to Newburyport. He agrees with her assessment of Newburyport after her recent visit. He adds that he hoped she had time to visit some of the local Newburyport sites, including the "old church where George Whitefield is buried."

The "Grand Itinerant," George Whitefield (1714-1770), was an English evangelist known for his preaching on both sides of the Atlantic. Considered a founder of Evangelical Methodism, he was a superstar in both Britain and the American colonies. Whitefield visited America seven times. He didn't survive the final visit. He died in Newburyport and was buried in the basement of the South Church. His crypt was directly below the pulpit until the church was reoriented on its lot.

By the time of Helen Sully's visit, the crypt had finally been sealed from public view after more than a century and a half of allowing tourists to view and occasionally handle the preacher's skeletal remains. Instead, she would have seen, resting on top of the burial alcove, a plaster cast of Whitefield's skull placed atop a plaster replica of his Bible.

Lovecraft probably had not planned a visit to the basement of Old South when he visited Newburyport in August of 1927. He was in Newburyport for



Whitefield skull and Bible
(photo by David Goudsward)

architectural antiquities. The tomb of Whitefield was an unexpected boon to the ardent Anglophile. Lovecraft would have seen a lot more of Whitefield in 1927 than the plaster skull that Helen Sully saw in 1933.

The church had kept Whitefield's decaying remains visible for the devout and curious. As a result, the remains were treated more like a tourist destination than a reliquary. Early visitors would cut snippets of Whitefield's robes as holy relics or souvenirs. One visitor convinced his tour guide to let him create a plaster cast of Whitefield's skull and then sold replicas, much to the delight of collectors and phrenologists on two continents. Early in the nineteenth century, a tourist stole Whitefield's right humerus and shipped it to a Whitefield fan in England. As one of the founders of Methodism, Whitefield would have been horrified at becoming a source of religious relics. Lovecraft would have found it hilarious — he knew Methodism didn't believe in holy relics.

The arm bone was returned with much local fanfare in 1849. However, it still took the church decades to install a glass cover and an oil lamp for those writing grisly updates on the clergyman's current decomposition. Lovecraft's visit in 1927 would have basically seen a disarticulated collection of yellowed bones. The skull had been polished white from being handled for over a century—the skeletal remains resting among the tattered shreds of decomposing robes.

The City insisted that the 200-year open crypt policy end, and it was sealed in 1933 with slate. One of the plaster skulls was placed atop a plaster replica of Whitefield's Bible. But the good reverend's indignities continue. Harvard Medical School thinks it owns one of Whitefield's ribs. The Methodist Archives at Drew University claim a knucklebone in their collection. Of course, like all good religious relics, there's no way to prove the loose parts are actually Whitefield's. And since it took over 150 years to close the crypt, it's unlikely it'll be open again soon to do a rib and finger inventory.

Skull #2: St. Augustine, Florida

On his second visit to St. Augustine in 1934, after an extended visit with Robert Barlow in Cassia, Florida, Lovecraft decided to stay a week in his beloved St. Augustine. He cut his minuscule food budget even further, to 16¢ per day (rather than cut back on his letter-writing, postage, and/or stops on the subsequent trip back north). So in June 1934, Lovecraft went exploring St. Augustine, with his finances always on his mind.

In April, the owner of the Fountain of Youth Park had been planting orange trees as another draw for tourists. That plan quickly changed when his gardener unearthed a skeleton. He called the police, who called the Smithsonian Institution. The Smithsonian dis-



The "Indian Burial Ground" at The Fountain of Youth Park (from Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division).

covered the entire area was a vast Native American burial ground. Some estimates placed the number of burials, unearthed and undisturbed, at over 1,000 different bodies. How could Lovecraft refuse to see the oldest antiquity in the Oldest City? He parted with a precious 25¢ and entered the Park he had first visited on his trip in 1931.

Lovecraft saw a massive graveyard — dozens of skeletons unearthed and on display for the tourists. Smithsonian archaeologists excavated around the remains, becoming an impromptu part of the tableau. In a letter to Wilfred Talman, Lovecraft uses the terms macabre and gruesome, high praise indeed. The remains were so popular that plans to erect a building around them were already underway. By the time Lovecraft returned the following year with Robert Barlow, the building was in place, a replica of a thatched-roof Indian council house. Inside, additional skeletons had been excavated, leaving over 100 deceased Natives exposed for the adoring tourists.

The remains were buried in the decidedly Christian tradition. The bodies lie with their faces toward the east. The ongoing excavations have since determined that this Christian burial ground was located on an earlier Timucua village shell midden that had been repurposed. Funeral materials with the burials (such as glass trade beads) date to the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Other burials were located but left undisturbed. The grave pattern helped determine the location of the original 1587 Franciscan Mission of Nombre de Dios, the First Christian Mission in the United States, and map the village's growth patterns.

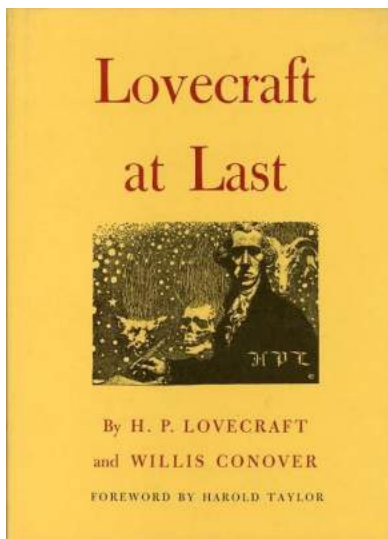
The "Indian Burial Ground" remained a highlight of tourist visits and school field trips for sixty years.

But complaints about the disrespect of the exhibit were also increasing, mirroring protests about museum collections of Native remains and grave goods across the country.

In 1990, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act went into effect. NAGPRA mandates that any institution receiving federal funds must comply with the act. Museum and College collections were inventoried, and Native human remains and associated funerary grave goods were returned to the local Tribes for proper reburial or disposal. As a private business, the Fountain of Youth was exempt. Still, a question arose whether public schools could spend money visiting a location with Native remains on display. So, the schools stopped sending field trips to the Park until the issue was settled. The drop in attendance was precipitous. In December 1991, the remains were removed and reinterred with Catholic funerary rites at an undisclosed location.

Skull #3: Providence, Rhode Island

Willis Conover Jr. was a sixteen-year-old science fiction fan who began corresponding with Lovecraft in 1936 after Lovecraft complimented Conover's *Science-Fantasy Correspondent*. The correspondence was brief;



Lovecraft was dead in 8 months, but Conover did send Lovecraft a Christmas present. In his 1975 heartfelt reminiscence, *Lovecraft at Last*, he recalls addressing prints of a Christmas card he had designed and glancing at his bookcase, where, sitting on top, was a skull and leg bones of a Native American he had excavated from a burial mound. On a whim, he took the skull and mailed it to Lovecraft as a gift.

Morbid under the best of circumstances, it arrived in January, weeks before Lovecraft was hospitalized for his fatal illness. It arrived in pieces, which Lovecraft mentioned in his thank-you note, adding he was looking forward to piecing it back together. That never happened, and the final disposition is unknown.

On a related note, someone tried a variation of this osseous theme in October 1997. Security guards discovered a three-foot-deep hole behind the stone marker that quotes Lovecraft's proclamation, "I am Providence." The would-be graverobbers made one mistake. They were digging behind a cenotaph, funded by fans and placed in August 1977 to match the gravestones of

his parents. He is buried in the family plot, but nowhere near the stone.

I'm not sure if this is some sort of karma, or if sometimes, the horror writer becomes the story. ♦



Family plot and H. P. Lovecraft cenotaph.



Fossil Fiscal Year '25

by Dave Tribby

HERE ARE the financial numbers for the most recent Fossil fiscal year, which ran from August 15, 2024 to August 14, 2025:

Treasury Balance on August 15, 2024	\$3910.02
Income for Fiscal Year 2025	
Memberships (20)	\$320.00
Subscriptions (2)	\$30.00
Donations (11)	\$163.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$513.00
Expenses for Fiscal Year 2025	
Bank Fees	\$36.00
Website – Internet Service Provider	\$0.00
Website – Domain Registration	\$12.16
THE FOSSIL – Postage	\$139.85
THE FOSSIL – Printing	\$557.54
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$745.55
Net Loss	-\$232.55
Treasury Balance on August 14, 2025	\$3677.47

Income from dues was down this year mainly because three members previously paid for multiple years; two other members were behind in their dues as of August 14.

Cost for printing THE FOSSIL was nearly the same as last year, while postage increased \$11.34 (8.8%). There was no charge for the website ISP this year because we paid \$35.91 for two years in 2024.

During the year we gained one new member, Michael Brown. We lost no members or subscribers, ending the year with 21 individual members, 3 joint family members (6 people), and 4 subscribers. ♦

Oscar Lee Knapp & Edward Henry Mountel: They Printed Edith May Dowe's First Amateur Story

by Ken Faig, Jr.

YOUNG Edith May Dowe made her debut in the amateur world at New England APA's Gardner, Massachusetts convention in 1883. Before too long, she began distributing her manuscripts to potential publishers. Perhaps by the luck of the draw, her story "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece" was the first to appear, in the *Cincinnati Amateur* for January 1884. The American Antiquarian Society has a file of this monthly journal extending from February 1884 to September/October 1884. But so far I have been unable to find a copy of the January 1884 number. I've been tempted to try to write the kind of story Miss Dowe (later Mrs. John Miniter) would have submitted as "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece," but so far I have resisted the urge. If her story should one day show up, it might far outshine anything I might attempt. Lacking the story, I thought I might see what I could discover about the two young printers who first placed a published story in the hands of the young authoress.

Oscar Lee Knapp (FamilySearch LZZ6-SJ2) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on Dec. 21, 1862, the son of Adam Henry Knapp (b. 1837, d. Jan. 14, 1917 Galveston, Texas) and Philomena Sophronia Schroeder (1842-1900). The 1880 U.S. census recorded the Knapp family at 98 David Street in Cincinnati: Henry (head), age 40, painter, born Ohio of Prussian-born parents; Minnie (wife), age 38 housekeeper, born Ohio of Prussian-born parents; Oscar (son), age 16, printer, born Ohio; Kate (daughter), age 13, vest maker, born Ohio; Lawrence (son), age 11, at school, born Ohio; William (son), age 9, at school, born Ohio; Bertha (daughter), age 6, at school, born Ohio. In the 1882 city directory, Oscar and his brother Lawrence were both recorded as printers, living in the parental household at 98 David Street. Earlier, in 1881, Oscar had been recorded as a press feeder.

Of Oscar's siblings, Katherine Knapp was born Dec. 28, 1866, and died on Sept. 8, 1947 in Orange, California. She married Oct. 9, 1916 (Riverside, California) Frederick William Sollee, Sr. (1854-

1942). Brother Lawrence F. Knapp was born on Oct. 4, 1868, and died on August 16, 1951 in Galveston, Texas. Brother William Joseph Knapp was born on Oct. 14, 1870, and died on Sept. 10, 1927 in Galveston, Texas. He married Nov. 26, 1894 (Galveston) Adelaide Seraphina Ganter (1873-1960). Sister Bertha Margaret Knapp was born on March 2, 1874, and died on April 28, 1934 in Galveston, Texas. She married April 20, 1902 (Galveston) Herbert Joseph Ganter (1875-1942).

The *Cincinnati Amateur* cannot have lasted much beyond 1884. As early as 1885, the Austin, Texas directory listed Oscar L. Knapp, printer, Warren & Company, boarding with B. R. Warner. The same directory recorded his brother Lawrence as an apprentice printer with the same firm, boarding in the same household. Texas was to be home to the three Knapp brothers—Oscar, Lawrence and William—for the rest of their lives.

Oscar had removed to Galveston by June 1, 1889, when he married Ellen Theresa Prame (b. 1862 Michigan, d. Oct. 18, 1898 Galveston), the daughter of William H. Prame (1822-1890) and Bridget Burns (b. Feb. 6, 1833 Ireland, d. Jan. 21, 1908 Denver). In 1890, he printed for Clarke & Courts, residing at 161 Church Street between 21st and 22nd. He remained in Galveston in 1891, printing for J. W. Burson Co., and residing at 1501 Mechanic Street. Following the death of his first wife in 1898, Oscar married Emily Amelia Johnson Boedeker (b. January 1880 Galveston, d. 1962) at Sacred Heart Church in Galveston on May 21, 1902. Rev. George A. Rittmeyer presided over the ceremony.

KNAPP BROTHERS
(Oscar L., Lawrence F. and Wm. J.), commercial printers and stationers, 2207 Mechanic. Ph. 90.
Knapp Joseph, painter, r. 3411 H. 7.
Knapp Lawrence F. (Knapp Bros.), bds 1209 Winnie.
Knapp Martin, lab S. P. whf, rms 4312 Church.
Knapp Oscar L. (Knapp Bros.), r. 3305 P. 4.
Knapp William J. (Knapp Bros.), r. 1211 Winnie. 6.
Knapp W. Mars R., clk Knapp Bros., h. O. L. Knapp.

1906 Galveston Directory

By 1910, Oscar and his family resided at 820 Denver Boulevard in Ward 7 of San Antonio, Texas: Oscar L. (head), age 44, in second marriage for seven years, born Ohio of U.S.-born parents, printer; Emily (wife), age 29, in first marriage for seven year, three children born, three living, born Texas of German-born parents; Beulah (daughter), age 19, born Texas, nurse; Mars [William Raymond Mars] (son), age 17, born Texas, salesman (stationery); Oscar [Jr.] (son), age 7, born Texas; Edward (son), age 3, born Texas; Juanita (daughter), age 4 months, born Texas. The two oldest children, Beulah and Mars, were from Oscar's first marriage.

The 1914 Galveston directory listed Oscar L. Knapp, printer, Knapp Brothers, residing at 1407 Avenue J; Lawrence F. Knapp (Knapp Brothers), residing at 1209 Avenue G; and William J. Knapp (Knapp Brothers), residing at 1211 Avenue G.

Oscar had removed to El Paso by 1915, when the city directory recorded him as a printer residing in Military Heights. The 1916 El Paso directory recorded him as a printer for S.W. Printing Co., residing at 3001 Mountain Avenue.

By 1917, Oscar had returned to San Antonio. The city directory for that year listed him as a printer, residing at 903 Hays. At some point, Oscar entered the State Epileptic Colony in Justice Precinct 1 of Taylor County. The 1920 U.S. census (enumerated Jan. 1, 1920) listed him as a 56-year-old resident there. The 1919 San Antonio directory listed at 812 W. Mistletree Avenue: Mrs. Emily J. Knapp; Oscar L. Knapp [Jr.], news agent; Beulah Knapp, graduate nurse; and William M. Knapp, U.S. Army.

Oscar Lee Knapp died in Abilene, Texas on April 6, 1923. However, Emily Knapp already listed herself as the widow of O. L. Knapp in the 1921 San Antonio directory. Her son Oscar Jr. and her stepdaughter Beulah resided with her there at 320 Preston Avenue. By 1927, Emily was working as assistant department manager for Joske Brothers department store and residing at 2711

Oscar L. Knapp, Veteran Texas Printer, Dead

WORD has been received by the officers of the Typographical Union of the death at Abilene of Oscar L. Knapp, a former resident of San Antonio, and a member of the Typographical Union for 40 years. Mr. Knapp was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1863. He was well known in Galveston, where he was engaged in business with his two brothers for several years, as well as in Austin, El Paso and other Texas cities.

At the time of the 1900 flood in Galveston Mr. Knapp was pinned under a mass of wreckage in his printing office on the Strand for 24 hours, barely able by strenuous efforts to keep his face above the water. He never fully recovered from the terrible experience of that time and died while under treatment at the State Hospital at Abilene.

Surviving Mr. Knapp beside his widow, residing on Saunders Avenue, this city, are two brothers, William and Lawrence, still conducting the printing business founded by him in Galveston, a sister in Denver, and four sons and two daughters. ♦

Saunders in San Antonio. Her daughter Juanita and her son Oscar L. (Jr.) also resided with her there. Emily, Juanita, and Oscar L. (Jr.) remained at 2711 Saunders in 1929. The 1930 U.S. census enumerated the family of Emily J. Knapp at 105 Marne Street in San Antonio: Emily J. (head), age 50, widow, born Texas of German-born parents; Oscar E. (son), age 26, railroad foreman; Edward J. (son), age 24, railroad chief clerk; Warnita [Juanita] (daughter), age 21, doctor's assistant; Frank J. (son), age 17, at school. The children had all been born in Texas.

Daughter Beulah Knapp (b. May 31, 1890 Galveston, d. Jan. 20, 1969) married Nov. 11, 1922 (Denver, Colorado) Archie Carl Anderson (1885-1935). Son William Raymond Mars Knapp (b. July 1891 Galveston) married Alice E. --- (b. 1894 Missouri) and was working as a stationery salesman in El Paso in 1930. Son Oscar Lee Knapp [Jr.] (b. March 13, 1903, d. April 19, 1985) married Ruth Winter (b. Feb. 5, 1910, d. Feb. 22, 1977).

Son Edward J. Knapp (b. 1906/07 Texas) engaged in railroad work for much of his career. Daughter Juanita Knapp (b. Sept. 13, 1909, d. June 1983 Houston) apparently remained single. Son Frank Joseph (b. April 28, 1912, d. Dec. 24, 1999 Houston) became an attorney and married Mary Inez Reed (b. Feb. 22, 1915 Bigelow, Arkansas, d. Oct. 3, 2007 Houston).

Oscar Knapp's partner Edward Henry [Eduard Heninrich] Mountel (FamilySearch GW3W-4TB) was born on Oct. 24, 1865 in Cincinnati, the son of Frederick Mountel (1832-1877) and Anna Broerman (1835-1911). His father, born in Hanover, Germany, was the son of Eberhard Mauntel (1792-1872) (note spelling difference) and Anna Maria [Mary] Knollman (1790-1883). The couple, born in Hanover, emigrated to Cincinnati with their sons Ludwig (1826-1913), Frederick and Franz (1833-1870) sometime before 1860. Eberhard, his wife and his sons are buried in Old St. Joseph Cemetery in Cincinnati.

The 1870 U.S. census enumerated three generations of the Mountel family in Ward 18 of Cincinnati: Edward [Eberhard], age 75, laborer, born Hanover; Mary, age 73, housekeeper, born Hanover; Fred, age 40, laborer, born Hanover; Annie, age 30, housekeeper, born Hanover; Mary, age 14, at home, born Ohio; Lizzie, age 11, at school, born Ohio; Louisa, age 10, at school, born Ohio; Edward, age 4, born Ohio; Louis, age 2, born Ohio.

By 1874, Frederick Mauntel, laborer, resided at 198 Findlay Street in Cincinnati. His widowed mother Marian resided in a rear entrance apartment at the same address. Fred Mountel, laborer, continued to reside at the same address in 1876. He died on July 30, 1877, age 45, of rectal cancer. The 1880 U.S. census enumerated the household of the widowed Anna M. (Broerman) Mountel at 169 Findlay Street in Cincinnati: Anna M. (head), age 45, widow, housekeeper, born Hanover of Hanover-born parents; Mary (daughter), age 24, seamstress, born Ohio; Elizabeth (daughter), age 20, seamstress, born Ohio; Louisa (daughter), age 18, seamstress, born Ohio; Edward (son), age 14, works in printing office, born Ohio; Henry (son), age 7, born Ohio. Young Edward Mountel, printer, continued to

reside in the parental home at 198 Findlay Street in 1880 and 1881.

All of Edward Mountel's siblings except Louis (b. May 13, 1868, Cincinnati, d. Dec. 14, 1870 Cincinnati) lived to adulthood. Mary Mountel (1856-1936) married July 22, 1891 (Norwood, Ohio) Henry Gerhard Schmidt (1858-1938). Elizabeth Mountel (1859-1944) married Nov. 27, 1890 (Norwood, Ohio) Henry Summe (1857-1902). Louisa Mountel (1863-1897) married Oct. 8, 1884 (Cincinnati) Michael Guenther (1855-1907). Henry Randolph Mountel (1872-1964) married June 28, 1899 (Cincinnati) Mathilda Bohmer (1873-1944). Henry conducted a tailor shop for many years, and then became a dry cleaner.

In 1885, 1886, and 1887, Edward continued to work as a printer, and resided in the family home at 125 Betts in Cincinnati. In 1891 and 1892, he worked as a printer for the Elm Street Printing Company at 176 Elm in Cincinnati.

On May 25, 1892, Edward married Anna Sebastiani (b. Jan. 22, 1865 Cincinnati, d. Dec. 16, 1944 Norwood), the daughter of Joseph Sebastiani (1828-1908) and Anna Barbara Becker Kaspar (1828-1873), at Holy Family Church in Cincinnati. John H. Menke, pastor, presided over the ceremony. Probably not long after this event, Edward acquired his home at 3106 West 8th Street in Cincinnati, just a short distance west of Holy Family Church at West 8th and Hawthorne. This house, built in 1885, still stands:



Edward and his family continued to live in this house through 1909. The 1900 U.S. census enumerated Edward

and his family there: Edward Mountel (head), age 34, born October 1865 Ohio of German-born parents, printer; Anna Mountel (wife), age 35, born January 1865 Ohio of German-born parents; Josephine Mountel (daughter), born March 1893 Ohio, at school; Loretta Mountel (daughter), age 3, born February 1897 Ohio; Eugene Mountel (son), age 6 months, born March 1900 Ohio; Joseph Sebastiani (father-in-law), age 72, widower, born Germany of German-born parents, secretary (insurance).

Of Edward's children, sons Edward Jr. and Eugene worked with him in his printing company. Daughter Josephine Mountel (b. March 1893, d. Nov. 8, 1918) married Harry J. Mollenkamp (1892-1956). Daughter Loretta [Loretto] Marie (b. February 1897, died August 22, 1983) was unmarried. Son Eugene Theodore Mountel (b. March 31, 1900, d. April 10, 1962 Campbell County, Kentucky) married Oct. 27, 1925 (Newport, Kentucky) Helen Maria Rentz (1901-1969). Son Edward Henry Mountel [Jr.] (born 1903, d. March 10, 1965 Cincinnati) married LaVerne Martin (b. 1903 Kentucky, d. 1976) and had children Martin E. (1932-1998) and Jessie Anna (b. 1938). Edward Jr., his wife LaVerne, and their son Martin E. are all buried in Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati.

By 1896 and 1897, Edward was foreman printer for the *Catholic Telegraph* newspaper (founded 1831). His printing business was located at 409 Main Street in Cincinnati in 1898-1903. Then, in the 1904 he removed to the Power Building (224 East 8th Street, northwest corner of 8th and Sycamore). This building, built in 1903, still stands, converted to condominiums as The Renaissance in 2002:



During these years, Edward was president & general manager of The Mountel Press. Henry W[illiam] Brons (b. April 25, 1880 Peoria, Illinois, d. Nov. 19, 1918 Chicago; wife Isabelle Witte [1882-1963], daughter of Herman and Josephine Witte) was his secretary-treasurer in 1910-18. Frank J. Westrup occupied the same office in 1920-24. By 1926, son Edward Jr. held the title of secretary-treasurer. The Mountel Press performed most classes of printing work, including books. In 1922-24, The Mountel Press moved to room 600 at 528 Walnut Street. In 1926, it made its final move to the northeast corner of Court and Sycamore Street (1006 Sycamore).

By the time the 1910 census was enumerated Edward and his family had removed to the substantial home at 2136 Shane Avenue in Norwood, Ohio which he occupied for the rest of his life:



The home is full of impressive woodwork, flooring and stained glass windows of which this photograph of the entryway is only an example:



Many more photographs can be found on Realtor websites.

By the time of the 1930 census, only unmarried daughter Loretta remained with Edward and Anna in their Norwood home. Edward died on Feb. 2, 1937, age 71. He was buried at St. John Catholic Cemetery in St. Bernard, Ohio.

Here is a photograph of Holy Family Church, where Edward and Anna were married in 1892:



The Mountel Press was continued after Edward's death; his son Edward Jr. became president.

They Built A City: 150 Years of Industrial Cincinnati (Cincinnati Post, 1938) mentioned The Mountel Press among the binders and commercial printers of the city. For many years, the firm made a specialty of publishing catalogs and other publications for Catholic institu-

Cincinnati Enquirer, February 3, 1937

Founder Of Press Company Dies Of Heart Attack – Edward Mountel Prominent In Catholic Orders.

SERVICES for Edward Mountel, President and General Manager of the Mountel Press Company, Court and Sycamore Streets, will be held at 9 o'clock tomorrow in St. Matthew Church, South Norwood. He died of a heart attack Monday night at his home, 2136 Slane Avenue, Norwood.

Mr. Mountel, who was 71 years old and a resident of Norwood for 29 years, founded the company which bears his name. A prominent member of several printing organizations, he was also affiliated with the Catholic Knights of Ohio the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, and the Isaac Joques Assembly.

Besides his widow, Mrs. Anna Sebastiani Mountel, he leaves a daughter; Miss Loretta Mountel, Norwood; two sons, Eugene T., Newport, Kr., and Edward Jr., Bond Hill, both of whom were associated with him in business; a brother, Henry R. Mountel, Hyde Park, and a sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Summe, Clifton Heights.



tions like Xavier University. Edward Jr. was still president of the firm when his family was enumerated at their home at 1735 Avonlea in Bond Hill in the 1950 U.S. census. I do not know when The Mountel Press finally ceased operations.

It is notable that both Oscar L. Knapp and Edward H. Mountel remained printers for their entire working lifetimes. Whether either kept a file of the *Cincinnati Amateur* is unknown to me. Perhaps a copy of the January 1884 number with Edith May Dowe's "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece" is still waiting to be discovered. Even if no copy is ever

found, we can be grateful to Messrs. Knapp and Mountel for enabling the young authoress to hold in her hands for the first time a copy of her work in print. Perhaps because of the troubled circumstances of her marriage to John T. Miniter (1864?-1900), Edith May (Dowe) Miniter was never able to have a human child of her own. However, "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece" was the first of her literary children, and Messrs. Knapp and Mountel were critical in its birthing process. Like most amateur journalists, they did not persist for long in the hobby: the year 1884 probably marked

the extent of their participation. By 1885, Knapp was off to distant Texas, and publication of the *Cincinnati Amateur* had been suspended. But Knapp and Mountel remained faithful to printing as a livelihood. At least Mountel seems to have been substantially successful as a businessman. In any case, lovers of the literary work of Edith May (Dowe) Miniter, ever hopeful of the potential discovery of "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece," can meanwhile keep Messrs. Knapp and Mountel in fragrant memory. ♦

Official Editor's Message

More on "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece"

by Dave Tribby

KEN Faig's discussion about the missing Edith Dowe story led me to search the Web for "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece." I found one reference, in *The Collector*, an amateur paper published by W. C. Chiles. In the March 1886 (Vol. II, No. 2) issue, Obadiah Obdyke mentions the story in "Miss Dowe as a Sketch Writer":

In the January (1884) number of *The Cincinnati Amateur*, my attention was called to a sketch by one Edith May Dowe, entitled, "Bert Gifford's Masterpiece." I had never heard of Miss Dowe previous to this, and came to the conclusion that she was a new writer.

The sketch at once took my fancy, and although she has written many better ones since then, for a maiden effort I was very much taken with it.

In the course of a few months there appeared in *The Young Idea* another sketch which ran through three or four numbers. This sketch, "A Shadow, and what came of it," may be classed among her best productions.

After this it was no unusual thing to see attached to the best sketches of our best papers the name of Edith May Dowe. In the comparatively short time she has been with us, she has risen to the highest round in the ladder of fame which the amateur press affords.

Her serial, "Back o' the mountain," won her the serial laureateship.

In speaking of this serial, Frank H. Converse in his Laureate Report says: "Miss Dowe's serial, for a beginner, is singularly well expressed, and the two noteworthy points are, first: a marked originality as to the construction of the story, and second, a decided talent for character sketching and scene portraying. Her conversational pages are excellently well put, and barring a very slight excess of the sentimental, quite excusable from a feminine pen in its teens. The entire narration is carried through from beginning to end in so able a

manner that I predict for Miss Dowe a literary future of no mean degree of merit."

Miss Dowe's style of writing is peculiar to herself, at times pathetic, yet her great fort is in lighter vein. Overflowing with humor, gifted with an even flow of language, she is destined to graduate with high honors from our little world of letters, and take her place in the wider, and more popular ranks of professionaldom.

Also in that issue is "A Tryst," a piece by Edith. Ken calls this "a major Miniter find." Here it is:

A TRYST.

The sky was of a radiant blue, very pale and misty. The stars were half unseen, and the glory of the moonlight filled the whole air and sky.

The moonbeams glistened in the thread like brook, they made the prosaic road a path of yellow glory, they fell through the branches of the forest trees, and lay upon the mossy ground in wandering flecks of yellow.

The village rested peacefully in the garish light. Everything was wrapped in silence, and the two people who alone were loitering down the lighted road, involuntarily spoke in tender whispers.

As they went further from the town, and became more utterly alone, he drew nearer to her, and ventured to take her plump hand into his.

Marie was a very pretty girl, with soft wandering blue eyes, and *crepe* yellow hair, and a pink face with pouting lips. She well knew Bernard adored her, and she was willing to contemplate leading a life as his companion. His excess of emotion rather wearied her, but then he was young, though older than herself.

"Marie," said he, removing his hat, and exposing his yellow curls to the golden moonlight. "Marie, you are my betrothed. You laugh, I know, at my sentiment. But I wish you to swear a tryst with me.

"Over the brook in the wood give me your hand, and promise me your life."

Did Marie turn pale? He could not tell, the moonlight was very deceiving. Was it a sigh which broke the silence? Or was it but the murmur of the rising breeze?

Marie's hand trembled, he knew but was not that because of her love for him. She allowed him to lead her to the forest, and there, under the vast canopy of rustling oaks, she gave him her hand,

"Over running water my love I pledge thee,"
—if her voice quivered, it was mere maidenly reserve;

"Over running water my life I promise thee," —
and so through the sweet old formula. But when he reached the words of the curse:

"If ever aught come between me and thee,"
why did he feel a shudder steal over him? Why did his eyes grow dim, and Marie seem so far away, and her voice sound so faint and muffled? And that low, piercing cry of hers? It brought him instantly to her side. "Marie, what has frightened you?" For the space of a few moments she paused, and then in her sweet tender voice replied, "Oh, Bernard, we women are so loving, so clinging, we cannot bear even the thought that aught may come between ourselves and those we love."

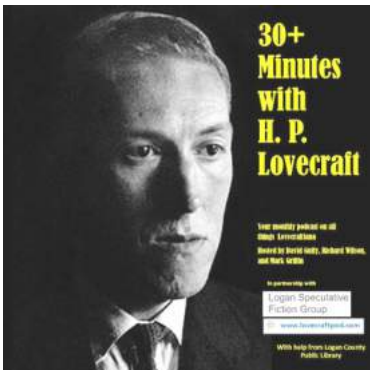
And then did Bernard kiss her once, and lead her quietly back to the peaceful village. And naught did come between them, for Bernard and Marie were wedded before the moon had departed, and the night was again hidden in darkness.

But the owl who sat in the hollow oak by the forest brook, behind his screen of ivy leaves, hooted ironically. For Marie had been to the tryst under another moon, and with another lover. And by coming between them had Bernard brought upon himself the curse. And it was for this that the owl shrieked upon the wedding night.

EDITH MAY DOWE.

Another Podcast Appearance

KEN made his fourth visit to the podcast 30+ Minutes with H. P. Lovecraft. The episode, "The Ajay of Lovecraft," was released on August 13 and is freely available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and a number of other streaming services. The description of the episode mentions, "Kenneth Faig returns to talk about the impact amateur journalism had on Lovecraft and even what the hell amateur journalism is."



Ken was also interviewed for the episodes "Edith Miniter" (October 13, 2022), "People & Places" (December 13, 2023), and "Seven Club Tales" (August 14, 2024). The podcast is

hosted by Richard Wilson, David Guffy, Sam Orndorff, and Mark Griffin.

New Member

MICHAEL BROWN joined The Fossils in June of this year. He works in cybersecurity in South Florida, currently being a director of security & compliance for a small firm in the healthcare sector.

He has run a pulp fiction review blog, The Pulp Super-Fan, for classic and new pulp at ThePulp.net since 2013. He joined PEAPS, the Pulp Era Amateur Press Society, three years ago and recently became their Official Editor. He has also joined NAPA, AAPA, ERBapa, and the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

Long interested in history, he is working on developing a history of PEAPS and completing a set of mailings. He also wants to do a history of the prior PHAPA, the Pulp Hero Amateur Press Association. Any help with these projects would be greatly appreciated. ♦

The Fossil

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