

The Fossil

Volume 122, No. 3, Whole No. 407 ♦ Sunnyvale, California ♦ April 2026

Fossil George Hamilton Passes Away at Age 94

by Dave Tribby

GEORGE William Hamilton was born October 19, 1931 in Wellesley, Massachusetts, a town of 15,000 less than 15 miles west of Boston. He was the son of Kenneth Gibbs Hamilton (1899-1961) and Elizabeth Whitney Adams (1903-1992) and brother to his younger sister, Nancy. As a child, he was intrigued by the local print shop, and when he was ten he received his own printing press, a small "Swiftset" model that used rubber type. Two years later he bought a used Kelsey 6 by 10 press along with metal type and accessories—a press he would use for the rest of his life.

Joining Kelsey's mailing list brought Bill, as he was then known, to the attention of National Amateur Press Association recruiter Edwin Hadley Smith, and he joined NAPA around the end of 1943, about the same time his family moved 115 miles northeast to Thomaston, Connecticut. The following July NAPA's annual convention came to Boston. George attended and met fellow newbies Tom Whitbread and Guy Miller as well as luminaries such as Ed Cole, Tim Thrift, Willametta Turnepseed, and Edna Hyde "Vondy" McDonald. From November 1944 to May of 1945 he published three issues of *The Skyline* with a total of twenty-four 3½ by 5 inch pages plus covers.



George at the 1944 NAPA Convention.

The first issue of *The Skyline* circulated to NAPA members was listed as Vol. 3, No. 1, the Third Anniversary issue. Previously it had been printed via his Swiftset press. It caught the eye of Tom Whitbread in his "Teen-Age Coordinator" column in the *National Amateur*:

We hope the next issue comes soon! The cut was very interesting. The memorial to Burton Jay Smith was well written and the paper was very neatly printed.

George's amateur activity was interrupted when he left home to attend Mount Hermon School in Gill,

Massachusetts, for his last two years of high school. His entry in the school's 1948 yearbook lists involvement with Swimming, Track, Dramatic Club, and Printing Club.



George Hamilton at the 2016 Amateur Journalism Conference.

He published a 14-page issue of *The Skyline* for March 1949 and another for September 1949 (set and printed in Ed Cole's shop in Newtonville, Mass.). He attended the 1949 NAPA convention in Brooklyn, N. Y. That fall he went on to Syracuse University in New York. His NAPA membership lapsed in October 1952 as he completed college (BA in Journalism and Political Science, MBA in Advertising) followed by service in the military. When he reinstated in August 1957 he was at Fort Meade, Md., but was back in Connecticut the following year.

Over the next twenty years he was employed in advertising, radio broadcasting, business development, hi-fi equipment distribution and retailing, television, hotel management, and international broadcast equipment sales. He lived in Amman, Jordan, from 1959 to 1962, and in the mid-1970s in Manama, Bahrain, and Beirut, Lebanon. When he visited Vienna, Austria, in 1960 he fell in love with the city. After three years of working in Quincy, Illinois, he moved permanently to Vienna in 1979, taking a job managing a series of publications focused on Eastern Europe economics and business. Eventually he would work as a free-lance journalist, including writing about Austria and East Germany for travel guides.

Except for five issues of *Slipsheet* published around NAPA's 1977 Kansas City convention, George's adult publishing activity was limited. He made his mark on the hobby by attending conventions where his friendly, outgoing personality and skill at telling stories left a distinct impression.

Although primarily active in NAPA, George also joined the American APA for a couple of years in the late 1940s, again from 1974 to 1979, and finally reinstating in April 1992. He letterpress-printed pages for

AAPA's annual cooperative publication, *Ink Cahoots*, in 2013 through 2016. He was fairly late becoming a Fossil, joining in December 2009.

George always enjoyed letterpress printing (when he lived in Illinois, he owned an extensive print shop but had to cut back to a more modest setup in Vienna) and attended meetings of the Amalgamated Printers' Association and American Typecasting Fellowship. He planned his summer visits to the U. S. so he could include as many ajoy and letterpress events as possible.

As co-chair of the 2011 AAPA convention, I got to introduce George as our banquet speaker. I wrote to his long-time ajoy friend, Tom Whitbread, to ask what to include in my remarks. Tom's reply:

I'd introduce George as a man of mystery who was into radio stations & TV in the Quincy-Moline area of USA and in the Middle East, and a sensitive soul who uses histrionics and formality and sarcasm to deal with life, and a lover of all things Austrian despite its anti-Semitism & because of ITS surface of ArmorAll manners & mannerisms.

Also, he's really a nice, good guy!

I believe the last time I saw George was in July 2016 at the Amateur Journalism Conference organized by The Fossils, NAPA, AAPA, and University of Wisconsin - Madison. He was 84 years old, but still an energetic raconteur who enjoyed being around people. Age soon began catching up to him, and the next year he decided not to make the trip to attend that summer's

Remembering George

by Ivan D. Snyder
AAPA Secretary-Treasurer

ONE OF the first things that come to my mind when thinking of George Hamilton is his appearance at so many conventions—not just AAPA conventions, but also NAPA's and at every APA ("Amalgamated") wayzgoose.

Associating with his hobby friends was a priority with George, and he allocated a significant portion of every summer to make his round of the gatherings. Having been in the hobby for so many years not only gave him a grand perspective of activities of each group, but he was personally acquainted with members of those groups. He participated! I recall that he stepped in as auctioneer at several AAPA conventions.

George first joined the AAPA in 1948, and although there have been breaks in his membership, his renewal record over the last thirty years has been enviable. Mindful of the extra expense of sending his bundles to Austria, he always made a sizable donation along with his renewal dues.

It's a new era, not having George in our group, but life goes on. Now whom can I talk with in German? ♦



George shows his versatility at the 2011 AAPA convention, serving as both auctioneer and banquet speaker.

gatherings. As he explained to me,

No, I will not be attending the NAPA (or APA) gatherings in Carson. APA and those participants is/are by far the greater attraction, but not enough to get me halfway around the globe. I have come to the conclusion that the primary cause of this confused and complicated household is that month I'm away when stuff accumulates and other chores do not get accomplished. My extensive collection of books on type founding and printing is months if not years behind in cataloging, for example.

I've got to come over to the States to renew my IL drivers license and keep my TMobile cellular account/number in effect/active but beyond those necessities, it's in and out as quickly as possible.

In August 2023 his name appeared on AAPA's list of expired members. An email message to him brought a quick reply: "Shouldn't have been dropped from AAPA, don't recall a dues/membership renewal reminder. ... After one hits age 90 orderliness is one of the first things to go, I fear!" I had a similar problem getting him to renew his Fossil membership (I kept him on the mailing list), and his replies to my email messages became less frequent. I last heard from him in July 2024:

Would hope to be in *Ink Cahoots* this year but one never knows when one is beyond 90 years. Simply too many whatevers with which to have to deal, so that's my reply for/at the moment. Tough enough simply trying to manage the daily responsibilities! If and as the situation changes I'll try to advise, although it has been a while since I had any of the Kelseys (several of them around!) up and running; rollers would seem to be okay but that isn't the only aspect (a primary one being me) of whether or not we manage an entry.

When he didn't renew in 2025, AAPA chose to award George a Lifetime Membership. His friends in APA made contact with one of George's nieces, who last August reported,

George no longer does any correspondence via email so for emergency sake, please update or add our email address to his contact info.

In addition, he will only answer the landline phone.

We just visited with George the beginning of this month. Overall he's doing ok for someone who is soon to be 94. He unfortunately no longer gets out so we had friends come to see him. He loved it!

Word finally came in January of this year that George passed away on December 22. In the aftermath, Matt Kelsey shared a remembrance:

George was *sui generis*, a phrase that I probably picked up from old amateur journals. When I saw him about 10 years ago at an APA wayzgoose, he remembered me from 40 years earlier. Not sure if I first met him at a

NAPA meeting in San Diego or Kennewick, or AAPA in Sunnyvale. But it had been many, many years.

You can read George's own account of his amateur journalism activities that he wrote for the July 2016 issue of THE FOSSIL, available online at

<https://thefossils.org/fossil/fos368.pdf>

See "How It Began and What Happened Afterward" starting on page 11. I wish he had written more of the stories about amateur journalism that he shared when talking in person. ♦

Fossil Profile

Sean Donnelly Returns to The Fossils

SEAN DONNELLY, who was a Fossil from 2004 to 2015, recently reinstated his membership. He authors a blog, Cabinet Obscura, found online at

<https://cabinetobscura.blog>

that touches on topics related to books and to amateur journalism. He provides a brief introduction to himself in the blog's "About Me" paragraph:

Sean Donnelly worked in academic publishing for twenty years as an editor and designer, is the author/editor of several books, has been an online bookseller for thirty years, owned a brick-and-mortar bookstore for twelve years, and currently works in the library field. He created this blog to share his interests as a reader, collector, and researcher.

There is much more information about him in the first blog entry, dated March 24, 2025:

By Way of Introduction

by Sean Donnelly

I came late to a love of reading. The right books didn't find me until I was 13, in 1989. That summer I "discovered" adventure, mystery, and science fiction when I read Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*, and Isaac Asimov's *Prelude to Foundation*. Asimov really hooked me. Science fiction, or his brand of it, was exactly what I wanted then. I read another 30 of his books — novels, short story collections, and autobiographies — before I read anything else. As a teenager without much

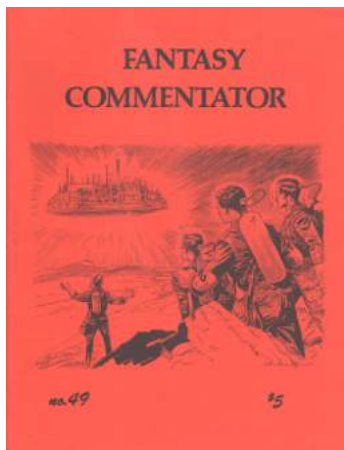
money, or the internet to make the search easier, I scoured local libraries to find the books I wanted. After



Lee Hawes and Sean Donnelly at the 2009 AAPA convention.

exhausting what they had to offer I learned about used bookstores, which I tracked down in the Yellow Pages. I was familiar with the chain bookstores one found at the malls then, like B. Dalton and Waldenbooks, but was surprised by the treasures — the "old" books — one could find in the second-hand shops. The books I could buy for a dollar or two from the 1950s seemed to me (thirty-something years ago) like relics from an age long past. They opened my eyes to the fact that books are more than vessels to hold a story. They are artifacts that tell multiple stories about authorship, publishing, editing, book design, ownership, and more.

This budding interest in books was shaped by Asimov. The history of the science fiction field — the pulp era and the Golden Age of the 1930s to 1950s — and its personalities were brought to life by numerous introductions to his books and his two-volume autobiography. I eventually learned about the many reference works about the field — literary surveys, bibliographies, publishing histories, and biographies. I especially like biographies (and autobiographies). It is "the biographical part of literature" — a phrase I would learn from reading Boswell's life of Samuel Johnson in college — that most intrigues me. And what a surprise it was to realize that many of the people whose books I read from that "Golden Age" — the 1930s to 1950s — were alive and well in the 1990s. During my high school years I got in touch with H. L. Gold, Algis Budrys, Jack Williamson, Lloyd Arthur Eshbach, A.



FANTASY COMMENTATOR

EDITOR AND PUBLISHERS
A. Langley Searles
48 Highland Circle
Bronxville, N. Y. 10708-5818

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
T. D. Chokroff, Eric East Davis,
Sam Moskowitz, Glenn Felder,
Lincoln Van Zee

Volume IX, Number 1 Fall 1996

Articles

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----|
| Far From Babylon | Andrew Durlington | 4 |
| Highways of Punch and Judy | Roger Clark | 12 |
| Veracity Paralyzed | H. P. Williams | 14 |
| Moe's Influence on Science-Fiction | Sam Moskowitz | 14 |
| Comments on "The Light-Box" | George T. Metcalf | 22 |
| I, Don Hubbard Revisited | H. E. Priesterman | 26 |
| Voyage Through Xenonia (part IV) | Sam Moskowitz | 38 |
| George Guller: an Obituary | Jean-Luc Bourd | 45 |
| Edge of the Glass | Sara William Crawford | 49 |
| Whitehead in Florida | Sam Donnell | 57 |
| The Immortal George II (part III) | Sam Moskowitz | 61 |

Sean's "Whitehead in Florida" was published in the Fall 1996 Fantasy Commentator.

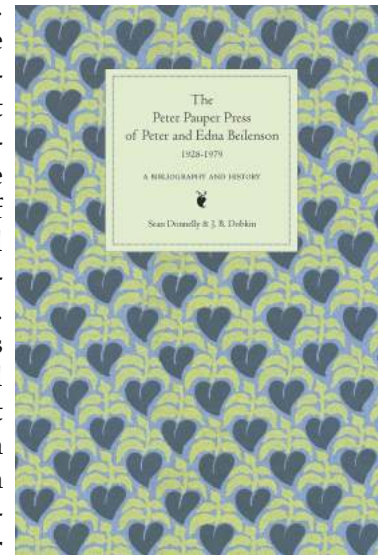
Langley Searles, Basil Wells, Mike Ashley, and Sam Moskowitz, among others. Sam's numerous historical works and anthologies inspired me to undertake my own research. Some notable writers had spent time where I lived in the Tampa Bay area, so I investigated their local connections; A. Merritt and Henry S. Whitehead in particular. Sam helped me with advice and when I had enough material to write articles he recommended that I contact A. Langley Searles, the editor of *Fantasy Commentator*. That journal had published essays on popular literature – science fiction, supernatural literature, adventure stories – since the 1940s. When my first article, on Whitehead, was published in 1996, it was a kick to see my name on the table of contents alongside Sam's.

This was the foundation of my interest in books – beyond just reading them – as a collector, researcher, and bibliographer. First, my interest in science fiction led to an interest in mystery and detective fiction, comic books, pulps and paperbacks – the whole scope of "popular literature" from the late 1800s to the mid 1900s. I was helped along by advice from well-read older friends. One learns so much more, and more quickly, from associations with like-minded people. My tastes and interests broadened in college and I became fascinated by the world of Anglo-American bookselling and collecting. A. Edward Newton's books introduced me to the rarefied heights of collecting, and then I found books by A. S. W. Rosenbach, A. N. L. Munby, John Carter, Alfred Pollard, and David Randall of years past, and contemporary writers like Nicholas Basbanes, Henry Wessells, and Kurt Zimmerman.

Collecting led to dealing thanks to the opportunities that the internet offered. My first foray into bookselling was through Ray Bowman of *Fantastic Collectibles*. He offered pages on his website where other sellers could post for-sale lists, which I sent to Ray by mail – a text file on a floppy disc! I sold quite a few books that way, all by mail. I still have a box of envelopes with orders and the file cards that I kept. By 1997, I was selling directly through Interloc (now Alibris). Files were transmitted via dial-up modem. The next year, I opened an

account on Abebooks, where I still sell books. This was all while I was in college as a history major. I considered a graduate degree in classical Roman history, but a professor urged me to think carefully about where I imagined myself working in the future. Where could I work with rare books and other materials? A library! So, I went to graduate school to earn a Master's in Library and Information Science.

Just before my last semester, and before I had begun to search for a library job, I was asked by antiquarian bookseller Michael Slicker if I would like to work on a bibliography of the Peter Pauper Press (its original incarnation from 1928 to 1978). The work would be done gratis, but I would be credited as the co-author. That was heady stuff to an aspiring bookman. I met with the director of University of Tampa Press, Dr. Richard Mathews, who would publish the finished book. Richard explained that his friend J. B. Dobkin, retired head of special collections at the University of South Florida, Tampa, had written a checklist based on a collection he'd made of Peter Pauper Press publications,



The Peter Pauper Press of Peter and Edna Beilenson, 1928-1979

but Richard wanted a descriptive bibliography. To work on that, I'd spend one day a week for the next three months at Jay's home, examining the books and writing descriptions. Richard and I kept in touch by email and phone, and he provided historical context for the press, educating me about the revival in fine printing and private presses that William Morris inspired with his Kelmscott Press. Richard was a Morris scholar who had lived at Kelmscott House as a visiting scholar. The first generation of American printers and type designers inspired by Morris – like Bruce Rogers and Frederic Goudy – were mentors to the next generation of printers, including Peter Beilenson, founder of the Peter Pauper Press. Richard made sure that I had an education in this period of Anglo-American printing history so that I could write a history of the press and put it in context.

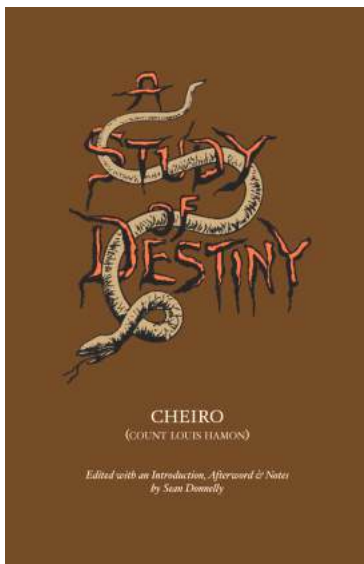
As I finished the first draft of the bibliography, in the spring of 2001, Richard asked if I'd be interested in working with him at UT Press. I hadn't looked seriously yet for a library job, so the opportunity to step into a job right out of college was



UT Press logo

tempting. What was more tempting, though, was the chance to see the publishing world from the inside — the daily work of editing, writing copy, collaborating with authors, desktop typesetting and design, selling and marketing books. What I had read about for years in author biographies and publishing histories I could experience first-hand. I accepted the offer and started work on June 1, 2001. I thought I might stay for a few years and then move on to a library career, but I stayed until 2021.

Over the years, as I gained experience and became comfortable with designing books myself, I brought



A Study of Destiny

Richard ideas for publications. The first was a series of reprints of lesser-known and out-of-print works of fantasy, science fiction, and supernatural literature. They would be like the old Dover reprints, with introductions and afterwords by an editor, but the text would be newly typeset rather than a photo-reproduction of the original publication. I suggested the series be called Revenant Editions, but Richard and our colleague at UT, Elizabeth “Libba” Winston, chose the name Insistent Visions. The three of us served as the editorial committee. We inaugurated the series with *The Library Window* by Mrs. Oliphant (edited by Libba), followed soon after by my edition of Cheiro’s *A Study of Destiny*. The desire to reprint that book had inspired me to propose the series in the first place.

One day, Richard asked if I’d like to join him for lunch at the Valencia restaurant (now gone) with his old friend Leland Hawes. Leland had been a journalist in Tampa since the early 1950s, and by the early 2000s was famous locally for his popular “History & Heritage” page for the *Tampa Tribune* (also, now gone). Leland was an early supporter of Richard’s letterpress studio, Konglomerati Press, which he operated from 1971 to 1986. He was also the first “amateur journalist” I’d ever met. I was familiar with that “hobby” because of my interest in H. P. Lovecraft, who had been involved in it from the 1910s to the 1930s. I didn’t realize, until I talked to Leland, that the hobby was going strong in the 21st century. Leland had been a “boy printer” in the 1940s. He began publishing *The Gator Growl* then, and he was still publishing it six decades later. During lunch, my interest in fantasy and science fiction was mentioned, so Leland asked if I had heard

of Lovecraft, amateur journalism’s most famous alum. “Of course,” I replied. That led to a friendship of our own, as he shared his love for the history of amateur journalism and I visited his home regularly to look through the boxes of old journals in his attic. I was especially intrigued by a long-time amateur journalist, and friend of Lovecraft’s, named W. Paul Cook. His motto, “For Love Only,” is a perfect expression of what motivates many amateur and private printers. Leland had a folder

WILLIS T. CROSSMAN'S
VERMONT

Stories by W. Paul Cook



Edited by Sean Donnelly and Leland M. Hawes, Jr.
Afterword by Welford D. Taylor

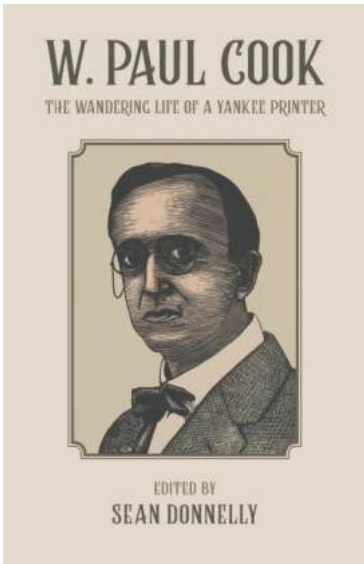
Willis T. Crossman's Vermont

of letterpress pamphlets, each with a short story that Cook wrote under the pen-name “Willis T. Crossman.” They are quaint, brief, quietly funny stories about Vermont characters. Their New England flavor and sensibility appealed to me as a Connecticut native. Eventually, Leland and I selected our favorite stories and Richard agreed to publish the collection as *Willis T. Crossman's Vermont*.

The afterword to our Crossman book was written by Welford D. Taylor of the University of Richmond. This was another relationship that came from my interest in amateur journalism. That interest, kindled by my friendship with Leland, led to a new field of collecting for me. I had acquired handsome little letterpress books and amateur journals produced by Marvin H. Neel and his Backwoods Press. A few duplicates I had were offered for sale online, and Welford ordered them. Welford explained that his interest in Neel stemmed from his scholarship on woodcut artist J. J. Lankes. Neel published a rare book called *Weather Sayings* with cuts by Lankes. As we corresponded by email, my interest in Lankes grew, and Welford asked if UT Press might want to publish a selection of Lankes’ letters. I looked at his file of transcriptions and said I’d love to work on it. Lankes was as good a writer as he was an artist. It seems we always had a full schedule at the press, but Richard agreed that I could work on the book in my spare time. After I had a rough draft done, Richard finally looked at the letters, and became familiar with Lankes’ woodcuts — and he was bowled over. We worked closely on the final stages of production, and I put Richard in direct touch with Welford. This led to a years-long relationship between Welford, UT Press, and the Lankes legacy. When we established the Tampa Book Arts Studio, Welford arranged for Lankes’ own 19th-century Washington handpress to come to UT on long-term loan. Over the years, a well-appointed studio grew up around that press, thanks to donations

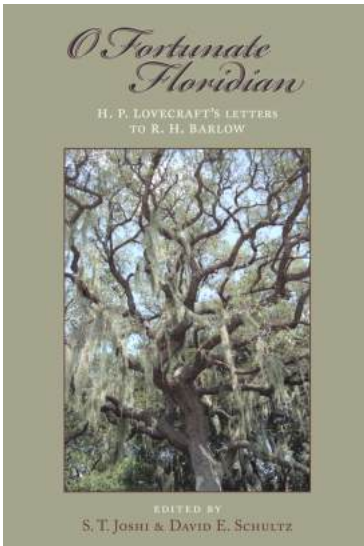
from many supporters. We produced books and broadsides in two locations on campus before other institutional priorities forced us to close. But the Special Collections that we established at the library, focused on printing history, book arts, and examples of fine printing, remains there.

My researches into amateur journalism led to further publications, like a biography of W. Paul Cook with a selection of his writings — *W. Paul Cook: The Wandering Life of a Yankee Printer* — published by Derrick Hussey’s Hippocampus Press. I became friends with scholar Ken Faig, Jr. through my activity in modern amateur journalism — the AAPA, the NAPA, the Fossils — and became acquainted with his works on the writer Edith Miniter. His findings were published in two huge hardcover books.



W. Paul Cook: The Wandering Life of a Yankee Printer

I proposed to Ken that we publish her best short stories and articles in a handier volume. We eventually edited two volumes, which Derrick Hussey published.



O Fortunate Floridian

Around the same time, I connected with Lovecraft scholars S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz. I worked with them on a collection of Lovecraft’s letters to Robert H. Barlow — *O Fortunate Floridian* — and with Joshi on several other publications: a revised edition of his Lovecraft *Bibliography*, an annotated edition of Lovecraft’s *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*,

and a volume of Gertrude Atherton’s stories for the Insistent Visions series — *The Caves of Death and Other Stories*. All were published by UT Press. Joshi eventually approached me with the idea of a scholarly journal that he would edit for the press. *Studies in the Fantastic* was born in 2008 with Joshi as editor, and Richard, Libba, and I as the original editorial board. It continues today under the editorship of Sarah Juliet Lauro.

My years at UT Press overlapped with other pursuits. I worked for twenty years with a private collector

to catalog and develop his collection. As a stock broker, Jerry began collecting books and manuscripts related to finance and business. He owned documents signed by George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and John D. Rockefeller, among others. As an amateur musician, he was also passionate about jazz and “the great American songbook” — the composers, singers, musicians, impresarios. He had documents, books, and photos signed by legends like Billie Holiday, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Duke Ellington, Bessie Smith, and Bix Beiderbecke. Working with Jerry was an education and a thrilling experience. To handle rare and valuable items like those he owned was much more educational than merely reading about them in catalogs. This experience introduced me to the specialized vocabulary of manuscript materials and exposed me to the finer points of paper, ink, and how to scrutinize such materials to determine their authenticity. The most valuable thing Jerry may have shared with me was his love of good content. He wanted items that “said” something interesting about the person’s life and career, or connected people who were important in each other’s lives.

Online bookselling has been a constant for me since the late 1990s as a part-time endeavor. I’ve also participated in the Florida Antiquarian Book Fair since 1995, first helping my friends Judy Fish and Harry Nash of Books to the Ceiling, then sharing the booth with Harry after Judy decided she didn’t want to participate anymore. I had an itch to be a retail bookseller and made a stab at that with a booth in the grand old Gas Plant Antique Arcade in St. Petersburg in the 2000s. When the management there changed I moved for a couple of years to Ross and Tom’s Antique Galleries, but then an opportunity presented itself to open a brick-and-mortar store. Harry Nash and I eventually opened our own store, DoraLynn Books, in Madeira Beach in 2011.

For the next ten years, I worked at the store three days a week (Harry worked three other days) and at UT Press three days, while I kept up with online sales and helped Jerry occasionally. For years, interests in research and writing took a back seat to everything else. But I did continue to buy books for myself and refine my personal collection. All the while I was making notes and thinking about follow-ups to things I’d already written about or venturing into new subjects. Following my departure from UT in 2021 and the closing of the bookstore in 2022, I had time to do a little writing for the Florida Bibliophile Society and Facebook groups. But I wanted a venue where more like-minded people might find the pieces I want to write, and so here we are at WordPress. I hope to connect with other bookish people on subjects that interest us. To share what I’ve found, and to learn as well. ♦

Ajay Kids Sharing Memories

by Pam Wesson

Location: Cambridge University, United Kingdom

Photographer: Barbara Groveman

Occasion: Groveman's son-in-law's graduation from Jesus College (part of Cambridge University)

Bernard (known in childhood as "Bernsie") Groveman, son of Bill and Gerry Groveman, in the 1960s-80s lived in Matawan, New Jersey, not far from the Wessons' Glen Ridge.

Bernie, who now lives in Austin, Texas, has fond memories of running around Harold and Hazel Segal's annual Amateur Press Club New Year's parties, eavesdropping on Segal-Wesson-Groveman et al's somewhat "coded" conversations about their War experiences, not meant for child consumption. (Bernsie was always far brighter than his age, a funny agitator to the friendship between his sister Helen (SueSue) and me.)

Pamela Wesson, now resident of Cambridge area (Fossil and ex-Pres AAPA, daughter of Shep and Helen Wesson of NAPA, AAPA, APA, Fossils), too many

memories to relate here. Prime among them:

- Bringing a Pearl press and a tiny stand of type to Princeton University in 1972 for my dorm room; teaching undergraduates letterpress printing in the University type lab (photo 1973 below).
- My father and I built the C&P of Prof John Fleming (Medieval Studies) in his living room one weekend. When Fleming came to talk in Paris to alums he specially asked me about Dad.
- Learning Aldus PageMaker in 1985 for my work at Knoll International, NYC and being totally awed by typesetting control and especially not having to distribute type! The rest of my career hinged on my knowledge of desktop publishing so I owe it all, and my resulting international adventures, to AAPA and Helen & Shep Wesson.
- Another favorite memory: Showing Dad basics of PageMaker on an early Apple in Florida. He couldn't really grasp it well but did publish a couple of journals with the help

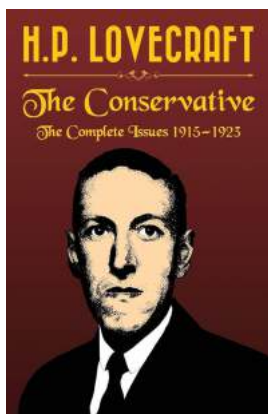
of a kind guy who came once a week to lead him through it. (I was living in Paris at the time so could not be present, sadly.) Mom told me once that Dad would sit for hours in total reverie just noodling around in PageMaker, watching type jump to his bidding.

Are there other ajay kids who would enjoy sharing their memories in THE FOSSIL? ♦



Lovecraft's *Conservative*, Complete

by Michael R. Brown



H.P. Lovecraft. *The Conservative: The Complete Issues 1915-1923*, Arktos, 2013, 220 pages.

H.P. LOVECRAFT is probably the most identified amateur journalist known outside the field. After he joined the United Amateur Press

Association (UAPA) in 1914, he became known to his fellow amateurs by submitting material to various amateur journals. But he also published his own, *The Conservative*, which ran for 11 issues from 1915 to 1919 and two more in 1923. While his amateur writing is available in Hippocampus Press's *Collected Essays* volumes, the complete contents of *The Conservative* has been rarely reprinted. (Necronomicon Press did a complete reprinting in 1977 and a collection of the 28 Lovecraft essays in 1990, but both have long been out of print.) But in 2013 Arktos, a British publisher, issued this complete collection via print on demand. Because Lovecraft included works by other amateurs, this complete collection is a great way to see what was being published within amateur journalism of the time.

The book starts with a fourteen-page foreword by Alex Kurtagic, a British musician, author, and artist. The foreword includes a short biography of Lovecraft, based on the writings of S.T. Joshi. Next Kurtagic looks at amateur journalism, a section that would have benefited from additional primary sources. Here we are told the peak of amateur journalism occurred between 1915 and 1925 (when Lovecraft and W. Paul Cook were involved) and then went into decline. I'm not so sure of that. UAPA, founded in 1895, is mentioned by name, but not the older (1876) NAPA or even the younger (1936) AAPA. Also overlooked is the long

lived British Amateur Press Association (1890 to 1990s).

The third section in the foreword looks at *The Conservative* and its history. We learn of Lovecraft's pre-UAPA publications, as well as how he got *The Conservative* printed. I wondered about this, as I knew that Lovecraft didn't have a printing press himself. Mention is made of both Necronomicon Press books, but not the current *Collected Essays* collections, a strange oversight.

Finally, the longest section of the foreword goes into the themes within *The Conservative*. This is probably the most interesting, though clearly from the view of a 21st century Englishman.

The bulk of the book, and of course the main interest, is the reprinted content from the 13 issues, all neatly typeset. Included is a lot of literary criticism that provides insight into what was going on within the amateur journalism world. For example, in the first issue Lovecraft provides feedback on authors, essays, and journals. However, this is not something that consistently appeared in each issue.

I had to use resources beyond the book for explanations of some situations and terms. Lovecraft writes of receiving an offer to join the "only real and original" version of the UAPA when he had been a member for a year or so, but there is no explanation of the United split. There is an endorsement for Leo Fritter for UAPA President, which was followed up by an open letter from him in the next issue. Only from other sources do we know that Fritter was elected. And there is an item where Lovecraft, who at the time was Chair of the Department of Public Criticism, has been discussing matters with his opposite number in the Department of Private Criticism, a distinction which is not made clear.

I found that issues vol. 1 no. 4 and vol. 2 no.1 consisted entirely of verse from a variety of authors, and every issue had some amount of poetry.

It's our nation's semiquincentennial, and it was interesting to read about the Revolutionary War in several issues. Most of vol. 2 no. 2 was taken up by the long "American Proletariat versus England" by Henry Claphan McGavrack. In vol. 3 no. 1 we get a further essay by him entitled "The Genesis of the Revolutionary War," plus another editorial by Lovecraft just before it. Considering that Lovecraft was a bit of an Anglophile, these essays weren't that big of a surprise.

I was disappointed by how little we hear from Lovecraft's friends within the movement. I saw one piece by W. Paul Cook, a couple by Frank Belknap Long, and some verses by Samuel Loveman. Rheinhart Kleiner, another friend of Lovecraft, submitted several short verses, but that was it. Would have been interesting to have seen more from Lovecraft's circle of correspondents at the time.

Since I'm not a fan of poetry, the items I found most interesting were Lovecraft's commentary and criticism on writing and amateur journalism, followed by his other commentary.

I have three criticisms for this work. First, the section in the foreword on AJ was superficial at best. For a volume reprinting amateur journalism, a better explanation of it is warranted. Second, as noted above, I wish more context had been provided. (Was Leo Fritter elected? What's the difference between public and private criticism? Who were Lovecraft's contributors?) While one can find this information in the *Collected Essays* volumes, I feel this work should stand on its own. And last, images of the covers and at least some of the printed pages would let us know what they looked like as journals.

As noted, if you are only interested in what Lovecraft wrote in *The Conservative*, there are other sources. But if you are interested in the "complete package," this is a nice and inexpensive way to find out despite the flaws. ♦

Prepare to Vote

by David Goudsward

EVEN-NUMBERED YEARS mean election time for The Fossils. So this is the official call for nominations.



President David Goudsward

Fossils' by-laws specify that we hold elections for two of the three members of the Fossil board. The incumbent president is a "carry-over" member. The current members, Monica Wasserman and John Horn, have indicated their willingness to continue on the Board, but any member is welcome to toss their hat into the ring. We ask you to submit your name, now or by June 30 at the latest, to Secretary-Treasurer Tom

Parson, 157 S. Logan, Denver, CO 80209.

Our current Secretary-Treasurer, Tom, will mail the ballots to all members by July 10, and members must return their ballots no later than July 31. The next term of office runs from August 15, 2026, to August 14, 2028.

The ballot will also include an amendment to the by-laws. This amendment clarifies that the Secretary-Treasurer is the only officer authorized to make disbursements from the organization's checking account. It's a minor tweak because our bank requires two or more signatures, all of whom the bank considers authorized to access the funds.



This is my first election as President of The Fossils, so I thought I'd take a look at how and why our elections work the way they do.

On September 1, 1927, the officers and 25 directors (one of whom was Thomas Edison) filed incorporation papers for The Fossils in the State of New York. President Leonard Tilden originally spearheaded the incorporation of The Fossils to legally accept bequests and protect the growing value of the Fossil Library, which became the Library of Amateur Journalism.

Then, in August 2006, under President Guy Miller, the Fossils disincorporated. The rationale was that the reasons for being a corporation no longer existed. Membership had decreased. The Library of Amateur Journalism had been transferred to the care of the University of Wisconsin in 2004. The Board, rather pessimistically, assumed the organization was unlikely to receive any large bequests, leaving the group with the expense of maintaining the incorporation.

The By-laws by which we operate were adopted upon disincorporation. Compared to the early Fossils, which had 25 (!) board members, the new by-laws reflect a smaller, more streamlined operation, lacking the chicanery and machinations that come with a large board; lest you forget, Lovecraft's "Hoffman-Daas" United was born and died by election politics.



I was talking to a fellow author who happened to mention she had just visited Antwerp and toured the Museum Plantin-Moretus, which houses the oldest surviving printing presses, some dating back to the 1550s. And it got me thinking. I wouldn't drop everything to fly to Belgium, but it made me curious about other museums of interest in Amateur Journalism. A quick look at Wikipedia shows a handful of museums specifically dedicated to printing, located in such places as Korea, China, Denmark, Bermuda, Mexico, Ireland, Japan, and the Museum of Typography in Crete. In fact, the only US museum mentioned is the Hale Pa'i Printing Museum on Maui in Hawaii.

There are obviously many US museums, listed or not. Most egregiously overlooked is the International Printing Museum in Carson, California. Still, others missing include Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, which moved the print office of Isaiah Thomas, one of America's most successful Revolutionary War-era printers, onto its living history campus. Technically, the Library of Amateur Journalism is too often an overlooked travel destination as well.

So, I urge all of you Fossils out there to send me your favorite printing museums that don't require a passport to visit, or visit an overseas museum if you need an excuse to travel. Write up a brief description of the museum, or better yet, write a review of the location with visiting tips, and we'll run it in an ongoing section of THE FOSSIL on AJ tourism. ♦

Proposed Amendment to the Fossils By-Laws

Article V, Section 3 (c): Secretary-Treasurer

An addition to Treasurer duties, for clarification.

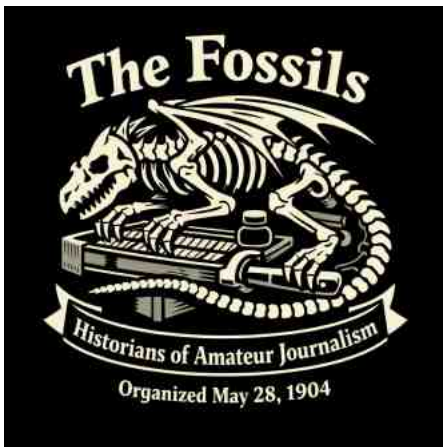
(4) The Treasurer shall be the only officer authorized to make disbursements as described in clause (2). Other signatories on the bank account are authorized to make payments only temporarily if the Treasurer position is vacant or the Treasurer is unavailable.

Modify the Fossil Emblem?

by Dave Tribby

IN HIS first message as president last July, Dave Goudsward noted The Fossils celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2029 and asked members to share ideas on how to mark the occasion. He came up with one of his own in a recent email message: modifying the Fossil emblem printed on the front page to add the year of establishment.

I pointed the Artificial Intelligence assistant ChatGPT at our current emblem and asked if it could add "Organized May 28, 1904," which I thought was a pretty simple request. The result was surprising:

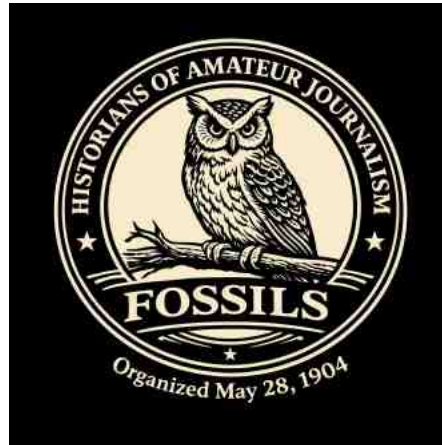


According to ChatGPT, the emblem depicts

- A fossilized dragon-like skeleton (often interpreted as a prehistoric creature).
- The creature appears wrapped around or integrated with printing tools (such as a composing stick or press elements).
- The imagery reflects the group's mission: preserving the "fossils" of amateur journalism — old amateur publications, printing artifacts, and historical records.
- The name "The Fossils" itself is metaphorical: members see themselves as historians preserving the remnants of earlier amateur publishing traditions dating back to the 19th century.

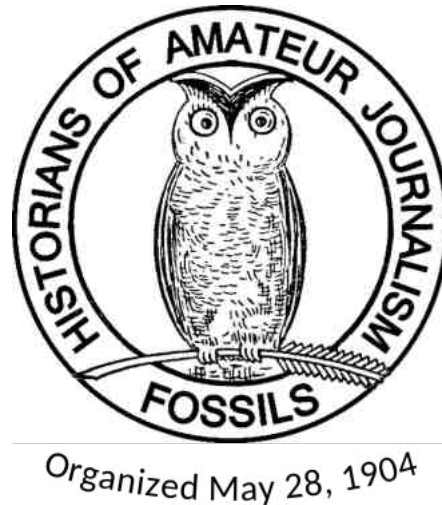
I wasn't expecting such a dramatic re-imagining of our logo! I asked it to try again, keeping things closer to the cur-

rent one. The second version:



For this one, the owl looks much like the one editor John H. Dow used in the flag and masthead in 1964. It was later revived by editor Russell L. Paxton in 1975 and used by subsequent editors until 2005.

Although I told ChatGPT I only wanted a simple addition to the existing emblem, it only prepared these more elaborate results. Google's AI assistant, Gemini, didn't even try to draw a new emblem for me, but it did tell me how to do it myself. Finally, Claude AI, by Anthropic, seemed to understand what I wanted:



I am not sure when the Fossil emblem was first used. The oldest issue in my incomplete file of THE FOSSIL that includes the emblem in the masthead is number 71 for December 1929. Of

course back then the wording was "Amateur Journalists of the Past" rather than "Historians of Amateur Journalism." While the previous issue in my collection, number 65 for January 1928, does not include the emblem, there is a reference to it in a note written by R. B. Teachenor:

The Fossil emblem is an owl design. Did my suggestion for an emblem of amateurism in my old *Amateur Exchange* of nearly 45 years ago have any influence in the selection of the owl idea?

Perhaps the emblem was introduced when The Fossils incorporated in 1927, or when preparing to celebrate the 25th anniversary in 1929.



Speaking of The Fossils' incorporation, while searching for news clippings of the event in Newspapers.com, I came across dozens of articles from across the country. Many were as brief as the one that appears here, but some were quite

**Edison Heads
'Fossils,' Old
Writers' Club**

(By The International News Service)
NEW YORK, Sept. 3.—
Headed by Thomas A. Edison, Sen. George H. Moses, Cyrus K. Curtis, Josephus Daniels, James M. Beck and other notables, a group of men prominent in their respective fields of endeavor today, but who, as youths, indulged in amateur journalism, secured incorporation authorization today for an organization known as "The Fossils, Inc."

"To perpetuate friendships formed 40 or more years ago between members, when, as youths, they edited or wrote for what were then known as amateur journals," the petition for incorporation explained.

This is how the Oakland, California, Post-Enquirer reported The Fossils' incorporation on September 3, 1927.

Twenty Years Ago in THE FOSSIL

Portions of articles appearing in the April 2006 issue

Who's On First? President's Message

by Guy Miller

"First things first" is a great rule to live by, provided one can figure out the order of priorities. In such a quandary we go by a second rule which is that people are more important than things; so, it is our pleasure to inform the membership that we have found our replacement for Secretary-Treasurer Stan Oliner who has moved onto the Board of Trustees, replacing the late Jerry Killie. **Tom Parson**, also of Denver, Colorado, has agreed to step in to finish Stan's unexpired term. We hope that Tom will enjoy the job because we will try to twist his arm (both, if necessary) to get him to offer his services for 2006-08. Tom begins his duties as soon as Stan hands over the checkbook. ...

Moving on from individual to entity, we want to announce that effective August 15, 2006, we will officially shed ourselves of our corporate identity under which we have operated for 79 years. It was in 1927 that President Leonard Tilden proposed that The Fossils incorporate so that it could legally accept bequests and protect the growing value of the Fossil Library ... Incidentally, no doubt because of the prominence of the men who made up our organization in 1927, news of the incorporation was widely circulated via the AP and UP wires and subsequently appeared in many large city newspapers such as *The New York Herald Tribune*.

Later, in 1985, without any public fanfare but, following much internal controversy, the charter of The Fossils, Inc., was transferred to Oregon. And there the matter has rested until the present hour. Now that our most prized possession, the Library of Amateur Journalism, has been transferred to the care of the University of Wisconsin in Madison and we are not likely to be bothered with a bequest of any size, your officers have elected that an incorporated status is an unnecessary expense. ...

Note, also, that in 2008 the office of Vice President will be eliminated and that the Webmaster, now a committee appointment, will be considered an appointive officer.

LAJ Progress Report

by Robin E. Rider

I wanted to offer an update on the Library of Amateur Journalism in its new home here in Madison. Now

that the project to install compact movable shelving in some of our vaults is more or less complete a full year later, much later than the schedule had predicted we have our work room back and usable for processing projects. We've thus begun to prepare inventories of the LAJ boxes (starting with the brown EHS boxes), to clean and rebox the contents in appropriate archival boxes, and to list specific preservation issues box by box. As that work goes forward, we will have a better idea of what additional archival supplies and preservation measure will be appropriate for LAJ.

We are also happy to be receiving issues of THE FOSSIL and packets from the United Amateur Press Association of America to add to the collection. Thanks, too, for the copy of *The Connecticut Amateur*, 1:4 (1902) enclosed with one of the issues of THE FOSSIL.

As in 2004, we are most grateful to you for your generosity and for everything you've done to assure the safe arrival of LAJ at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. ♦

The Fossil

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of The Fossils, a non-profit organization for anyone interested in the history of amateur journalism. Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join. Dues are \$15 annually, or \$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to THE FOSSIL without privileges of membership, is \$10. For further information, contact the secretary-treasurer or visit our website:

www.thefossils.org

Fossil Board: 2024 - 2026

David Goudsward, **President**, 5141 Second Road, Lake Worth, FL 33467; president@thefossils.org

John Horn, 24300 Chenal Parkway, #71, Little Rock, AR 72223; jhorn@thefossils.org

Monica Wasserman, 1423 Graves Avenue, Apt. 143, El Cajon, CA 92021; mwasserman@thefossils.org

Appointed Officers

Official Editor: Dave Tribby, 1529 Fantail Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087; editor@thefossils.org

Secretary-Treasurer: Tom Parson, 157 South Logan Street, Denver, CO 80209; s-t@thefossils.org

Historian: Ken Faig, Jr., 2020 Chestnut Ave., Apt. 405, Glenview, IL 60025; historian@thefossils.org

Librarian: Mike Horvat, 22275 SW 102nd Place, Tualatin, OR 97062; librarian@thefossils.org

Webmaster: Dave Tribby (contact information above)
