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# Lumières, Fall 1983

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# LUMIÈRES

## Frank Merriwell and His Chums in the Library; Or, Rare Book Room Revelations

Dime novels in the Rare Book Room? Yes! The Middleton Library recently received from Mrs. Jordan Lee a small collection of examples of nineteenth-century publishing in this delightful format.

The seventeen titles are from one series, the Frank Merriwell "books for young men." As the reader examines each small volume, he notices such heroic titles as *Frank Merriwell's Generosity; Or, Kind to Friend or Foe*, *Frank Merriwell's Bravery; Or, True To His Chums*, and *Frank Merriwell's Confidence; Or, The Boy Who Held On*. The introductory pages state that the stories are "rich in fun and thrills in all branches of sports and athletics. They are extremely high in moral tone and cannot fail to be of immense benefit to every boy who reads them."

This series followed the true form of the definition "dime" novel, and these paperbound books of melodramatic tales of adventure were popular in the United States from the 1860s to the turn of the century. The artists who did the sensational cover illustrations probably inspired the dust jacket and paperback cover designers of today.

In England, such publications were known as "penny dreadfuls," "penny awfuls," and "shilling shockers." Beadle and Adams, the earliest publisher of dime novels, sold their books for ten cents apiece. However, our Frank Merriwell series, published by Street and Smith Corporation, New York, actually sold for fifteen cents. Other "dime" novels sold for as low as five cents.

The author of the series was Gilbert Patten, who invented a pseudonym, Burt L. Standish, to write about the moralistic hero. The first episode, which is included in the LSU Rare Book collection, was *Frank Merriwell; Or, First Days at Fardale*. It appeared in *Tip Top Weekly* on April 18, 1896, and marked an immediate and long-lived career for both Frank Merriwell and Burt Standish.

Standish (Patten) was an introvert and very unathletic, but his fictional hero was strong, handsome, proficient, and moral. Since Patten wrote Merriwell stories for seventeen years, he tried to spice up the action by adding younger brother Dick and a son, Frank, Jr. The author at first thought the stories were a joke, but he began to take them seriously when they were being read by half a million young people every week. Over eight hundred stories were published.

In addition to Frank Merriwell, other heroes featured in various series prolifically produced by the same publisher were Buffalo Bill, western; Jack Lightfoot, sports; and Nick Carter, detec-

tive ("Nick is manly, he is courageous, he is intelligent and fights clean.") For other preferences, there were sea stories and love stories. Today the so-called dime novel is a highly sought after collector's item and commands a substantially higher price than when first published.



Karen McCord  
Library Assistant  
Louisiana and Rare Book Rooms



## Book Bazaar News

The eighth annual *Friends of the LSU Library* Book Bazaar held at Bon Marche Mall, October 6, 7, and 8 was a roaring success.

Before the start of the sale more than a hundred people had lined up with boxes, satchels, wagons, and other carryalls just waiting to pounce on the tables. To heighten the suspense tables were covered this year for the first time with dustcovers. The covers were whipped off at 10:00 a.m. and the gold rush began. The sale this year was a clean sweep, with the highest total earned yet—more than \$30,000.

This year's book bazaar chairman was Mrs. Delroy O. Spann. Mrs. Charles Bryant Smith served as secretary, and Mrs. Warren David Millican was treasurer. The co-chairman was Mrs. Raymie Edmonds. Having the year-round responsibility for the book barn were Mrs. R. Gordon Kean and Mrs. Eugene Owen. Last year's book bazaar chairman, Mrs. John M. West, III, served as collections chairman, assisted by Mrs. John B. Noland. The transport chairman was Mrs. Robert Stuart with Mrs. H. F. Bradford as assistant chairman. Serving as sales chairman was Mrs. John Keenon.

The arrangements chairman was Mrs. Floyd V. Womack, Jr. Mrs. John Gonce and Mrs. T. O. Perry, assisted by Mrs. R. T. Brown, III, were in charge of the stockroom. The staffing chairman was Mrs. William E. Edrington, Jr., with co-chairman Mrs. Frank W. Middleton, Jr. Hospitality was coordinated by Mrs. Lewis W. Eaton, Jr., assisted by Miss Susan Eaton and Miss Barbara Ann Eaton. Publicity was handled by Mrs. John Munson. Scrapbook chairman is Ms. Sandra Mooney and library liaison is Mrs. Kenneth Kahao. The information chairman was Mrs. Chauvin Wilkinson assisted by Mrs. John C. Fisher.

Photographs by Don Morrison



New dean of the LSU School of Library and Information Science, Kathleen Heim, scooped up an armload of books to buy, to the delight of Eileen Kean and Doris Smith.



The 1983 Book Bazaar chairman Marion Spann (standing) poses in the stock room with the 1984 chairman Billie Keenon.



Sue Edrington and Jane Middleton show off a title from "The West," a new category for the 1983 sale.



Dr. Edwin Davis consults with "Collectors and Curiosities" expert Nora Grigsby.



## Profile of a Bibliophile

"It's congenital . . . collectors are born that way," he explains when asked why he collects books, and that must be true because Joseph Ewan, professor emeritus of botany at Tulane University, has been collecting books for almost all his life. He clearly remembers buying his first old book, an 1860 edition of *Flora of the Southern United States*, and describes in detail the bookstore on 64th Street in Los Angeles and how exciting it was for him, as a high school student in 1928, to recognize this "find." He takes the book from the shelf as he talks, his eyes twinkling as he recalls his original pleasure, and he describes how the store owner thought the book was not worth much because there weren't any pictures in it.

As Professor Ewan talks you discover that every volume in his library has its own story: the author and why he wrote the book or how he got it published; the previous owner and his annotations and corrections as the book was used; and the dealers who handled the volume and what they did or did not know about the subject are all familiar reminiscences associated with each title. Ewan is especially interested in book dealers and speaks fondly of those he has known in Los Angeles, Philadelphia and as far away as Copenhagen. He remembers the dealers he met when he first came to Tulane in 1947 and is concerned that someone should write a history of New Orleans book stores on Toulouse and Royal Streets before this bit of local history is lost. He also remembers the librarians who have influenced his passion for collecting, starting with Miss Marjory Van Deuson, his high school librarian. "She couldn't help but tell you about books and how they are put together," he recalls, describing his experience as a library page in high school and later in the Westwood Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library while he studied at UCLA. He brought this interest in libraries to New Orleans and has helped to acquire special items for Tulane. Even now, when you ask a student for directions to Professor Ewan's office, you will be told, "I don't know, but you can always find him in the library."

Ewan's own library of more than 4,500 titles, built through a lifetime of compulsive collecting, is crowded into three rooms. His most recent acquisitions reveal eclectic tastes, with *Jefferson and his Times* next to *Herpetology of Brazil*. Along one wall, arranged geographically starting with Patagonia and working up through South America, are books in use as Ewan proceeds with his current work, a bio-bibliography of Latin American exploration and travel by naturalists. He and his wife Nesta, who has also co-authored two of his other books, are writing *this* book, he says, "for librarians and booksellers."

The center of one room and part of another are devoted to biographies of naturalists, botanists and zoologists, and to the history of science, interests which are reflected in some of Ewan's own publications including *A Short History of Botany in the United States* and *John Banister and his Natural History of Virginia*. There are also four file drawers of printed biographies and twelve drawers of Ewan's biographical notes on his colleagues, used in his recent work, *A Biographical Dictionary of Rocky Mountain Naturalists*.

Professor Ewan retired from teaching in 1977, but has never retired from research. In addition to the bio-

bibliography he is preparing, he will, next spring, accept an appointment in Washington, D.C., as a Smithsonian Regents Fellow.

Beth Paskoff  
Science Bibliographer

## Odd Volumes

The *Friends* 1982 Christmas keepsake, a reproduction of a David Gleason photograph of bonfires on the levee from the LSU Press book *Plantation Homes of Louisiana and the Natchez Area*, was given an Award of Merit for Excellence in Printing in the category of "Greetings, three or more colors," by the Printing Industry of the South at the annual convention in July 1983. Printing, Inc., of Baton Rouge was the recipient of the award.

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It was announced at the fall meeting of the *Friends of the LSU Library* Board of Directors that two new board members have been appointed by *Friends* President Dr. Charles Prosser. Accepting appointments to the board were Mr. Don Bell and Mrs. Marie Bickham. The *Friends* are pleased to have these active members of the Baton Rouge community join in their efforts. Also joining the board as an ex-officio member is the new dean of the LSU School of Library and Information Science, Kathleen Heim, who was an assistant professor in the graduate School of Library Science at the University of Illinois before coming to LSU.

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The additional two floors for the Middleton Library will be completed in early 1984 with occupancy planned shortly thereafter. Renovation of the Hill Memorial Library into a special collections building is scheduled to begin before December of this year.

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The guest speaker for the *Friends* annual dinner next spring will be Alex Wilson, the director general of the Reference Division of the British Library. During his visit to Baton Rouge, Mr. Wilson will also deliver the 50th Library Lecture sponsored by the LSU Library Lecture committee in honor of Mrs. Ella V. Aldrich Schwing, series benefactor.

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Master of Arts in the Humanities—a new, interdisciplinary graduate program for mature, part-time students will be offered beginning this spring on the Baton Rouge campus. An alternative to traditional study in a single discipline, the M.A.H. program primarily serves students who several years earlier completed their undergraduate academic studies and who now wish to resume studies after beginning a career in business, the professions, or the family. Many courses will be offered in the evening. For more information, call 388-1641.



# The Magic of Fiction in the Dream State

A part of the Middleton Library's collection is on display in the State Capitol.

Art has been brought literally to the doorstep of the state legislature in a series of displays which have been installed in the House of Representatives Committee rooms and adjoining hallway. Speaker of the House John J. Hainkel, Jr., conceived of this program as a means of making our state legislators and the public who visit the capitol more aware of Louisiana's creative arts.

Novelists are featured in one of the five large exhibit cases in the hallway. Entitled "The Magic of Fiction in the Dream State," the selection of books, photos, and manuscripts of the writers are from the collections of the Louisiana Room and the Archives Department of the Middleton Library. Evangeline Lynch, M. Stone Miller, and Sandra Mooney were responsible for the exhibit. It may be viewed between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily through May 1984.

Sandra Mooney  
Central Reference Department



## Memorials

In memory of

*Mr. Frank W. Bennett*

by Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Bennett, Jr.

*Mr. Ben M. Burns, Jr.*

by Chancellor Emeritus Cecil G. Taylor

*Mrs. Powell A. Casey*

by Mr. and Mrs. Max Goodrich, Mr. and Mrs. M. Stone Miller, Jr., General Louie C. Reinberg

*Mrs. Nellie Craig*

by the Library Office staff

*Mr. Darl Vesey Falk*

by the Graduate Association of Sociology Students

*Mrs. W. H. Farrell*

by Miss Vivian Cazayoux, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie McKenzie, Mrs. Lamar Pugh, Jr., Miss Caroline Wire

*Mr. Lloyd Guidry*

by Mr. and Mrs. George J. Guidry, Jr.

*Mrs. Peggy V. Henry*

by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle

*Mrs. William Bruce Herrin*

by Mrs. Katharine W. Coco

*Mr. Harry A. Johnson*

by Mrs. H. P. Breazeale, Jr.

*Mr. James W. Lyon*

by Dr. and Mrs. Max Goodrich

*Mrs. G. F. Matthes*

by Mr. and Mrs. Martin C. Schroeder, Jr.

*Mrs. Irby C. Nichols, Sr.*

by Miss Florien McKnight, Mr. and Mrs. Verdie Reece Perkins, Mrs. George A. Preston, Mr. George A. Preston, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Martin C. Schroeder, Jr., Mrs. Leon C. Standifer

*Mr. Gene Noblitt*

by Mrs. Mary B. Mills

*Mrs. Benjamin S. Pace*

by Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Williams

*Mr. Lamar Pugh, Jr.*

by Mr. and Mrs. George J. Guidry, Jr.

*Mrs. Frances B. Rangely*

by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle

*Dr. Walter Richardson*

by Dr. and Mrs. Irwin A. Berg, Dr. and Mrs. Max Goodrich, Dr. and Mrs. Donald E. Stanford

*Mr. Albert Scown*

by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle

*Mrs. Herbert M. Scull, Jr.*

by the staff of the Center for Energy Studies

*Mr. Marcel Strickland*

by Mr. and Mrs. John J. Capdevielle

*Mrs. Cecil G. Taylor*

by Mrs. H. P. Breazeale, Jr., Mrs. Frank W. Girlinghouse, Mr. and Mrs. George J. Guidry, Jr., Miss M. Margaret Jameson, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Kirby, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie McKenzie, Dr. William A. McKnight, Mr. and Mrs. Verdie Reece Perkins, General Louie C. Reinberg, The Thirty-Niners Book Club, Mr. and Mrs. Ross Van Volkenburgh, Miss Caroline Wire





## Gift Memberships

You can introduce a friend or relative to the *Friends of the LSU Library* through a Christmas gift membership. A contributing membership carries circulation privileges at the LSU Library. What better gift for an avid reader than access to two million books? A gift membership in any amount will insure that the recipient will be given a 1983 *Friends* Christmas Keepsake.

The classes of membership are:

Regular	\$ 10.00
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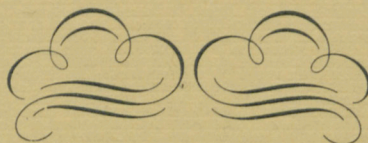
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