Lumières, Fall 1983

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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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 awfus," 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, detective ("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
The eighth annual *Friends of the LSU Library* Book Bazaar held at Bon Marché 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. 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 Heilm, scooped up an armload of books to buy, to the delight of Eileen Kean and Doris Smith.

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

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 how they arc put together; the librarians who have influenced his passion for collecting, starting with Miss Marjory Westwood, who has also co-authored two of his other biographies and twelve drawers of Ewan's biographical bibliography he is preparing, he will, next spring, accept an appointment in Washington, D.C., as a Smithsonian Regents Fellow.

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 Arca, 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.

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.

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.

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.

Lumieres
Published by the Friends of the LSU Library
131 Pleasant Hall, Louisiana State University, Anna Perrault, editor

Literally "lights" in French, lumieres is frequently used to denote enlightenment or knowledge. As such, it illustrates the purpose of the newsletter: to enlighten members of the Friends of the LSU Library with news of the organization and with needs of the LSU Library. The cover design is based on an exquisite hand-illuminated border from a 15th century French religious manuscript.
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.

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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.

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