



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD NEWSLETTER

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SOF Launches New Book Series

In late April the SOF announced the publication of the first in its planned Brief Chronicles book series: *The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford . . . and the Shakespeare Question: He that Takes the Pain to Pen the Book*. Roger Stritmatter, Ph.D., Professor of Humanities at Coppin State University, is the general editor of the book; Professor Bryan H. Wildenthal, J.D., is special editor.

This book focuses primarily on the twenty-one (or twenty-two, depending on how one counts) “canonical” poems of Oxford—those that have traditionally been attributed to him, either because his name or initials appeared on them in manuscript or in early published volumes, or because mainstream academics generally agree that they are his. The book sets forth a large number of parallels between these poems and the Shakespeare canon: rare words and phrases, as well as rhetorical and thematic similarities (see page 32 for an example). Of particular interest is that the demonstrated parallels are not evenly spaced throughout Shakespeare’s works; instead, many occur in Shakespeare’s earlier works (*Venus and Adonis*, *The Rape of Lucrece*, and the early history plays), suggesting that, as “Shakespeare” embarked on the playwriting phase of his career, he relied to a greater extent on the themes and ideas he had already worked out in his poetry. In other words, the analysis of the “canonical” Oxford poems demonstrates that they are indeed Shakespeare’s juvenilia.

The product of more than three years of research and writing that involved a team of a dozen volunteers, the book assembles thousands of linguistic parallelisms between the de Vere poems and the plays and poems of Shakespeare. “Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of writing this book has been to follow the neurolinguistic pathways of the Bard’s imagination as revealed by systematic study,” said Stritmatter. “Often an idea, figure of speech, or particular phraseology that originates in de Vere’s poems gets recycled multiple times with slight variations over time in the Shakespeare plays and poems. Over and again we discovered elements that occur first in de Vere and later in derivative forms in ‘Shakespeare.’ It is clear that the book represents a significant breakthrough for the Oxfordian hypothesis. It was also exciting to work with so many volunteers to assemble the book’s intricate documentation of the close cognitive and emotional connections between the young de Vere and the mature works of ‘Shakespeare.’”

The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford . . . and the Shakespeare Question: He that Takes the Pain to Pen the Book is intended as the first of two volumes on Oxford’s poetic works. The second volume, expected shortly, will examine another set of about eighty Elizabethan era poems which, Stritmatter argues, are also by Oxford and should properly be attributed to him. This volume will be the second in the SOF’s Brief Chronicles book series. The third anticipated volume will focus on the pedagogy of the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

Almost 150 years ago, noted British literary scholar Alexander Grosart wrote of Oxford that an “unlifted shadow . . . lies over his memory.” The Brief Chronicles book series aims to uplift the shadow to restore a man whose reputation has long been eclipsed by error, envy, and obfuscation.

The Poems of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford . . . and the Shakespeare Question: He that Takes the Pain to Pen the Book is available on amazon.com: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1727777921>.

The Poems of Edward de Vere,
17th Earl of Oxford . . .
and the Shakespeare Question
Volume I: He that Takes the Pain to Pen the Book
Roger Stritmatter, General Editor



From the President:

This is a good time to be an Oxfordian!

We are starting to make some dents in the Stratfordian monopoly of news items by working on several fronts. Our various committees, Public Relations, Data Preservation, Looney "'Shakespeare' Identified" 100th anniversary (SI-100), are actively working on promoting Oxfordian events. We are also redesigning the home page of our website to make it more attractive to non-Oxfordians and general doubters. There are separate detailed reports in this issue from these Committees on their activities. Some of the highlights are:

- Steven Sabel, our PR and Marketing Director, is making great strides in the first six months of operations. Of special note is the event held on February 16, in Santa Barbara, California. See his report on page 3.
- Kathryn Sharpe, our Committee Chair for Data Preservation and SI-100, is planning activities and events for 2020. For data preservation activities, the Board of Trustees and the Research Grant Committee just approved a \$2,000 supplemental grant for additional tasks James Warren proposed concerning the Looney papers and research at several libraries in England. Kathryn Sharpe is

working on planning an event to commemorate Looney in 2020, in the US, and is also assisting coordination with the De Vere Society in England for an event there. See her report on page 17.

I recently contacted the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., to inquire about their hosting a Looney 100th Anniversary event in March 2020. I received a very courteous response from Brian Rothart, Executive Assistant to Director Michael Witmore, stating that, unfortunately, "the Folger is scheduled to start our renovation project in January of 2020 and will be closed to the public for a period of 16 to 24 months. Mike [Witmore] said he would love to revisit this once the building is reopened."

I thanked him for their response and further said, "We look forward to the opening of your new Library, which we shall be eager to visit. We will contact you again in the future when we have an event to present new and interesting information on the Shakespeare Authorship Question at the Folger. Over the next two years we will have more publications on the Shakespeare Authorship discoveries which you will find interesting. This year our main conference will be in Hartford, Connecticut, at Mark Twain's home. As you know, Twain was a Shakespeare authorship doubter, and his last published work was *Is Shakespeare Dead?* We are also providing grants for

The Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

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The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to investigating the Shakespeare authorship question and disseminating the evidence that Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), is the true author of the poems and plays written under the pseudonym "William Shakespeare."

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship pursues its mission by supporting research, educational and scholarly initiatives, annual conferences, website and social media, and by publishing this Newsletter and an annual scholarly journal, *The Oxfordian*.

The Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship was formed in 2013 when the Shakespeare Oxford Society, founded in 1957, and the Shakespeare Fellowship, founded in 2001, united to form a single organization. Dues, grants and contributions are tax deductible to the extent provided by law.

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Articles, essays, commentary, book reviews, letters and news items of interest to the Shakespeare Oxfordian community are welcome. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship. As provided in the bylaws, "The conferences, publications, and other educational projects of the Fellowship will be open forums for all aspects of the Oxfordian theory of authorship."

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research in public and private libraries in England, in the northern Italian cities that are locations for Shakespeare plays, and in Moscow, at the Russian State Archives, to investigate Russian-English exchanges during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras. We appreciate that Dr. Witmore is looking forward to revisiting this very intriguing issue once you reopen. You should know that we at the Fellowship applaud the Folger for its dedication to Shakespeare studies in an open manner.”

At this point, of course, we are looking for other venues for an event in March 2020 to celebrate the centennial of the publication of “*Shakespeare Identified*.”

As you can see, we are actively working on getting the Oxfordian message out to the public. It is a slow

process, but we are making progress. Many people do not know that there is even an issue about the Shakespeare authorship. Once they know about it, they discover that there is a great unresolved mystery awaiting them!

There is much to do and we need your help. **PLEASE DONATE** (see inserted flyer) so that we can pursue our many projects: PR, Research, Podcasts, Website, Video Contest, Data Preservation, Looney 100th Anniversary event, etc.

We’re here and we’re clear -
It had to be Edward de Vere!

- John Hamill, President

SOF PR Update

by Steven Sabel, SOF Director of
Public Relations and Marketing



Indeed it is a great time to be an Oxfordian!

I can’t contain my excitement at the early successes we have experienced through our PR and marketing efforts in these first six months of operations. Under the direction of Board members Julie Sandys Bianchi and Joan Leon, with the collaboration of others such as Bob Meyers, Tom Regnier, Bryan Wildenthal, Jennifer Newton, members of our Speakers Bureau, and other members at large, we have collected quite a few worthwhile media mentions and public presentation opportunities! We are gaining some momentum.

Work continues on the further development of our media database. As I write this, we stand at more than 5,000 media contacts covering thirty states, Washington, D.C., and a large portion of Southern Ontario, Canada. These contacts include publishers, managing editors, section editors, reporters, and columnists working for active daily, weekly, and monthly publications. We focused building our list first on areas where we have a volunteer member serving on our Speakers Bureau. As we complete each state and/or region, press releases are created and sent to the media contacts in each speaker’s region. When a speaker is requested and then scheduled, another press release goes to that region announcing the event, or (in the case of an event not open to the public) a follow-up story of the event is sent to the outlets in that region.

Through these efforts we have scored the following victories:

February 16, Santa Barbara, California: Bryan Wildenthal presented at the Karpeles Manuscript Library and Museum (see page 5). That event garnered news mentions in the two largest Santa Barbara media outlets, including an interview of Bryan for the major daily newspaper that included a front page photo of Oxford *above the fold* and the man from Stratford. Santa Barbara’s NewsHawk featured a follow-up story about the event with the headline “Was Shakespeare Really The Bard? That Was The Question Considered at Karpeles Manuscript Library.”

March 6, Alexandria/Fairfax, Virginia: Bob Meyers presented for the Alexandria Kiwanis Club as a result of one of our Speakers Bureau press releases. Later, a Virginia Connection news outlet story ran with the headline “Arlington Kiwanis Club Opens Minds: Questions about authorship of Shakespearean writings.”

May 6, Osceola/Kissimmee, Florida: Ron Destro will speak for the Kissimmee Lions Club, as a result of a press release sent to his region. We will use details and photos from his presentation to create a story to send to his media region after the event. We are currently scheduling Ron to speak at the Hart Memorial Library in Kissimmee, as part of their annual Shakespeare Festival in October.

October 10, Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan: We are currently scheduling with the Grosse Pointe Public Library for Richard Joyrich to present there as part of its literature week events.

We have fielded other requests from other areas where we do not have speakers easily accessible. There are some areas where we do not have any speakers at all, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, or states in the South, such as Arkansas and Tennessee. We can also use more speakers to cover specific areas of larger regions. We can't possibly expect Bonner Miller Cutting to cover all of Texas!

We have received three requests for presentations in Delaware: Lewes Public Library, Lewes Osher Learning Center, and the ACTS Retirement Community in Seaford. Currently our closest speaker to that area is Bob Meyers, a three-hour drive away. Who knew that Delaware would be such a hotbed of curiosity about the SAQ? Other requests have come from the Cornucopia Arts Council in Halfway, Oregon, and the Los Banos Crest Theater in Los Banos, California.

There is an interest in our topic at the grassroots level, and a need to provide local communities with access to the truth. Every local community Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and other clubs have weekly meetings. The members of these service organizations are also the local leaders in business, government, education, media. Someone in each of those organizations is responsible for scheduling a guest speaker for each and every meeting, fifty-two meetings per year. Let's help them out!

Contact your local service organizations and offer to be a speaker at one of their meetings. If you need help preparing a PowerPoint presentation, we have members willing to share their slides with you, and help you personalize your presentation. Once you are scheduled, let me know the details: who, what, when, where, and why. We'll fashion the appropriate press releases and follow up stories. We'll send them to the media for your region. We will arm you with SOF literature to hand out at your presentation. Our members need only look at our own "How I Became an Oxfordian" series to see how successful a grassroots movement can be for a cause such as ours.

If you are a member of a local collection of SOF members, or other SAQ group or organization, I want to hear from you! Your events and activities could be newsworthy to your region. If they're not newsworthy, then let's make them newsworthy. Hold an informational event, sponsor a public lecture, organize a booth at a local festival, and we will help you promote it. If there is not a local SOF group near you, start one! Invite a group of friends over for a dinner party. Read some scenes from your favorite Shakespeare plays, pass out some sonnets. Mix in some Oxfordian juvenilia for fun. Ask your guests to find the "imposter" in the mix, and then tell them that the true imposter is the man from Stratford.

The interest is out there. Through more than 5,000 media contacts, we enjoy 98 percent retention of added contacts. Simply put: only two percent of the added contacts have unsubscribed from our press list. We enjoy a 23.2 percent "open rate" across our national list (meaning our emails are opened by 23.2 percent of our contacts). The industry average rate for comparable nonprofits is only 20.94 percent. Meanwhile, we are experiencing nearly 20 percent regular *engagement* with our press release emails. At least one in five journalists out there are paying attention, and the more pertinent, timely, and targeted information we send to them, the more our chances increase for "getting some ink" (as they say in the newspaper business).

It's important to "arm" members and speakers with SOF literature. We have recently completed the first edition of the SOF Membership Brochure. As with any new marketing collateral, there are already changes in the works for the content of the second edition, but we are pleased with the general layout and content of the first edition, which we are working towards distributing to members who need them for events or speaking engagements. A downloadable copy will soon be available at our website.

Plans are also in the works for a revamping of our website. Early redesign discussions have produced some excellent ideas for streamlining information, centralizing details important to members, and creating more user-friendly aspects of the site for newcomers and curious media representatives.

New SOF letterhead has also been recently created. Official SOF communications now list our esteemed board members and their professional credentials. Presentation folders have been designed, and in conjunction with the redesign of the website, a professional media packet will be created, printed, and assembled for distribution to major media markets, academia, and other influencers.

It is a great time to be an Oxfordian, and all of this momentum is happening thanks to our dedicated members—those who have contributed resources to help fuel this effort, those who have volunteered to serve on the Speakers Bureau, various committee members, and of course our dedicated president and board of trustees, who are keeping the ship aright and safe from "pirates." Meanwhile we continue our mission, one Oxfordian at a time!



What's the News?

Bryan H. Wildenthal Gives SAQ Presentation in Santa Barbara

On Saturday, February 16, law professor and SOF Trustee Bryan H. Wildenthal gave a presentation on the Shakespeare Authorship Question at the Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum in Santa Barbara, California. Thanks to the efforts of Steven Sabel, SOF's Director of Public Relations and Marketing, and Norman Cohan, Director of the Santa Barbara branch of the Karpeles Libraries (an Oxfordian himself), the event received lots of advance publicity. On the previous Monday, the leading area newspaper, the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, ran a page one article on the upcoming event, with a photo of Oxford above the fold (see photo).

Wildenthal reports that almost 100 people attended, of whom only a small number were Oxfordians. "My talk, with about 100 PowerPoint slides, took about ninety minutes. This was definitely too long, I need to trim it down for future events. But while a few people slipped out, the vast majority stuck with it, and the applause at the end was enthusiastic. Quite a few stuck around for another thirty minutes of Q&A. Most seemed to be without a lot of knowledge of the authorship issue and were genuinely curious. Based on pre-conference comments we overheard, a fair number were strong Stratfordians. The Q&A after the talk was friendly, with very thoughtful and high-quality questions, some of which seemed to come from a Stratfordian perspective."

Wildenthal also noted that Library co-founder "David Karpeles himself is interested in the SAQ and went to the trouble personally to arrange a special exhibit

of documents from his collection, including an original manuscript of the Oxford poem 'My Mind To Me a Kingdom Is.' Though credited, as it often used to be, to Sir Edward Dyer, it is now viewed as a likely de Vere poem."



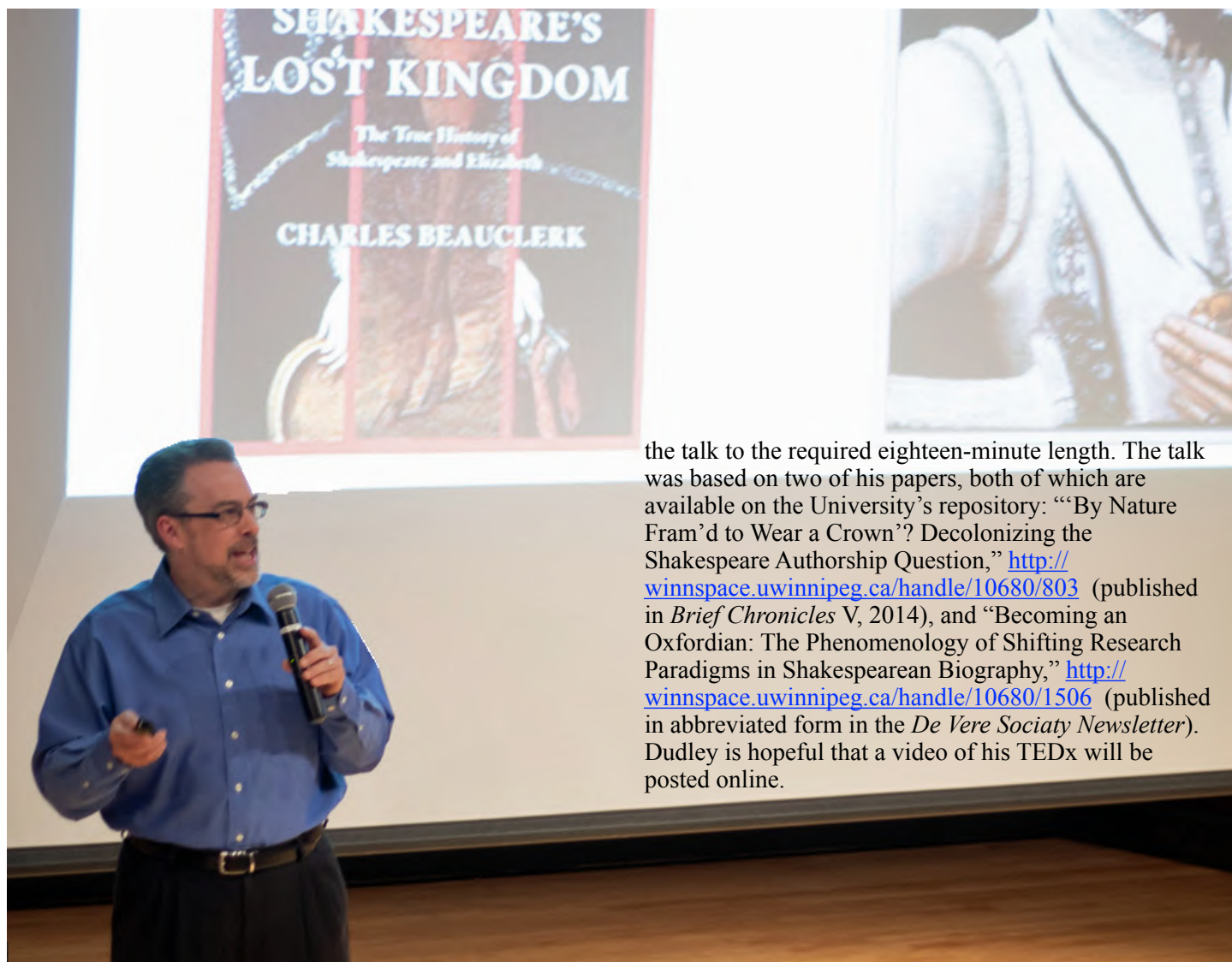
Michael Dudley Gives TEDx Talk in Winnipeg

On March 16, Oxfordian Michael Dudley gave a TEDx talk on the SAQ at the University of Winnipeg. Titled "Liberating Shakespeare," it was promoted as a recounting of Dudley's "personal journey of discovery regarding the mysterious poet-playwright's problematic biography, and its marginalization in the academy. It examines the colonial, nationalistic origins of the mythic biography of 'the Bard,' and the ways in which the academy reproduces dominant narratives about him, before mapping the lived experience of those who have transcended this myth to embrace a new paradigm of

Shakespearean authorship." TEDx presentations are similar to TED talks. TEDx talks can be organized and sponsored by anyone who obtains a free license (in this case the University of Winnipeg, where Dudley serves as its Community Outreach Librarian) from TED and agrees to follow certain conditions.

Dudley reports that his presentation "was very well received. There were probably sixty people in the audience. It was the traditional eighteen minutes, but no Q & A. However, quite a few people came up to me afterwards to express their enthusiasm. Most of the tenor of it was, 'I'd never heard anything about this!' 'This makes so much sense!' 'Why aren't schools teaching this?' In fact, the lead organizer came up to me and said, 'Well, now I'm an Oxfordian too!'"

Dudley said that his main challenge was reducing



the talk to the required eighteen-minute length. The talk was based on two of his papers, both of which are available on the University's repository: "By Nature Fram'd to Wear a Crown? Decolonizing the Shakespeare Authorship Question," <http://winnspace.uwinnipeg.ca/handle/10680/803> (published in *Brief Chronicles* V, 2014), and "Becoming an Oxfordian: The Phenomenology of Shifting Research Paradigms in Shakespearean Biography," <http://winnspace.uwinnipeg.ca/handle/10680/1506> (published in abbreviated form in the *De Vere Society Newsletter*). Dudley is hopeful that a video of his TEDx will be posted online.

***Nothing Is Truer Than Truth* Screened in Ashland, Oregon**



On March 29 Cheryl Eagan-Donovan hosted a screening of her acclaimed Oxfordian documentary film, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon. The screening was arranged by SOF Trustee Earl Showerman, who teaches authorship-related classes at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at SOU. Earlier in the day she appeared

on the local National Public Radio outlet for an interview on its "Jefferson Exchange" program. Eagan-Donovan stated that the host, Geoffrey Riley, was "both well-informed and articulate, which made the conversation fast-paced and very engaging. We also responded to questions from a few listeners who called into the show, wanting to know more about other authorship candidates Marlowe and Bacon. This indicated to me the audience was aware of the doubts about the traditional bard, and eager to discuss evidence about the authorship."

The film screening took place in the Meese Auditorium at SOU, before an audience of about 100 persons. It was followed by a Q&A with Eagan-Donovan, Showerman, and Paul Nicholson, Director Emeritus of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. "It was great to be back in Ashland, where it all began," Eagan-Donovan noted later. "I had attended my first Shakespeare Authorship conference there in 2005, and met with Mark

Anderson to discuss optioning his book *"Shakespeare" By Another Name*. I returned to Ashland for the SOS/SF conference in 2010, where I shot several of the interviews that appear in the film, including those with Alex McNeil, Paul Nicholson, Earl Showerman, Richard Whalen, and Michael Cecil. At the 2015 conference, I screened a work-in-progress cut of the film."

Following the Ashland screening, Eagan-Donovan journeyed north to Portland to attend the 2019 AWP (Association of Writers & Writing Programs) annual conference, where she moderated a

panel discussion on adapting literary works for film, and discussed her film.

Further screenings of *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth* were scheduled for London on April 27 (De Vere Society annual meeting), and Chicago on May 2 (Swedenborg Library). Eagan-Donovan said, "We continue to receive requests for the film from Oxfordians and Shakespeare lovers in Germany, Sweden, Australia, and the U.K., so our focus now is on finding international distribution."

Nothing Is Truer Than Truth is available for purchase on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

SOF Nominations Committee Report

The Nominations Committee (chaired by Don Rubin, with members Cheryl Eagan-Donovan and Joan Leon) is pleased to present the SOF membership with a slate of four candidates to stand for election to the Board of Trustees, and one candidate to stand for election as President, at the annual membership meeting in Hartford, Connecticut, October 17-20.

Nominations to the Board and to the office of President may also be initiated by written petition of at least ten members in good standing, so long as the petition is submitted to the Nominations Committee by August 18, 2019, which is the required sixty days before the annual meeting. Petitions may be sent to drubin@yorku.ca or to P.O. Box 66083, Auburndale, MA 02466. The results of the Board election will be posted on the SOF website immediately after the annual meeting and reported in the *Newsletter*.

Nominee for a one-year term as President:

John Hamill is nominated for another term. He retired from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco as a project manager in 2010. He attended the University of Puerto Rico, California State University, and the University of California at Davis. He has a Masters in Historical Geography and is an independent scholar who has written frequently for *The Oxfordian* and the *Newsletter*.

Nominees for three-year terms to the SOF Board:

Ben August became an active supporter of Oxfordian activities after reading Mark Anderson's *"Shakespeare" By Another Name*. Thereafter he removed the traditional Shakespeare bust from his library shelf. Not able to find a de Vere bust, he resolved to have one made, and commissioned a bronze bust of Edward de Vere, sculpted by Paula Slater. An original has been placed at Castle Hedingham. An associate producer of Cheryl Eagan-Donovan's documentary film, *Nothing Is Truer Than Truth*, Ben also produced an outstanding limited edition red wine at Mount Veeder Magic Vineyard in the Napa Valley, which he named "Earl 17."

Richard Foulke has been interested in the authorship question since 1999. In 2001, Rick and his wife, Lucinda, began attending meetings of the Chicago Oxford Society organized by Marion Buckley and Bill Farina. After the group disbanded, he became active nationally and in 2006 he attended the SOS/SF Conference in Ann Arbor. The Foulkes traveled to Italy in 2013, using Roe's *The Shakespeare Guide to Italy* as a guidebook; they have also toured de Vere sites in England. Rick has been an active member of the SOF's Finance Committee.

Bryan H. Wildenthal is nominated for a second three-year term. He holds an A.B. and a J.D. from Stanford. He taught law for more than two decades at Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego. He has been actively involved in the Oxfordian community since 2012 and has written and lectured extensively on the Shakespeare Authorship Question.

Nominee for a two-year term to the SOF Board:

Theresa Lauricella was appointed, pursuant to the bylaws, to a one-year term by the Board of Trustees in 2018 following the resignation of trustee James Warren, who had been nominated for a three-year term; she is now nominated to serve for the remaining two years of that term. She has an M.A. in Theatre History and Criticism and a B.A. in Theatre from Ohio University. She is Associate Professor of Theatre and Program Coordinator for Theatre and Music at Clark State Community College in Ohio and serves as the Artistic Director and Producer to the Theatre Program.

Leaving the Board of Trustees after serving two consecutive three-year terms are **Tom Rucker**, who has served as Treasurer, and **Joan Leon**, who has overseen fundraising efforts. The Board of Trustees thanks them both for their service!



In Memoriam: Ann Zakelj (1947-2019)

Oxfordian Ann Zakelj passed away on February 13, 2019, at the age of 71. She is perhaps best remembered to many of us as the principal organizer of two highly successful guided tours to places connected to Edward de Vere: “On the Trail of Edward de Vere” in England in 2013, and “Shakespeare in Italy” in 2016.

Born Anka Anzic on March 10, 1947, in Austria, she moved to the United States in 1950. She grew up in the Cleveland area, graduating from St. Augustine Academy in Lakewood, Ohio, in 1965, and receiving a B.A. in English from nearby Ursuline College in 1969. She married John Zakelj and they settled in Willoughby Hills, where they raised two children. Ann also worked for the U.S. Department of Defense.

Ann Zakelj was an avid traveler; she visited more than fifty countries during her lifetime. She was a member of St. Vitus Church, where she sang in the choir.

She became an Oxfordian sometime in the 1990s after reading Richard Whalen’s book, *Shakespeare: Who Was He?* In 2006 she emailed Mark Anderson, author of “Shakespeare” *By Another Name*. “I found your book on Amazon,” she wrote. “I get goosebumps reading it!” That led to a long email correspondence. She later assisted Anderson in administering the ShakesVere Facebook group. Anderson recalled, “Ann was a tenacious, insightful and focused organizer and advocate. And in my personal experience, she was also a kind and thoughtful correspondent.”

She is survived by her husband, John, a son, Christian, and a daughter, Becky. For more information



Ann Zakelj

on the two Oxfordian trips she organized, see Ann Zakelj, “On the Trail of Edward de Vere: June 18-28,” *Shakespeare Matters*, Fall 2013, and Alex McNeil & Ann Zakelj, “Shakespeare in Italy 2016: The Tour,” *Newsletter*, Summer 2016.

In Memoriam: Gertrude “Trudy” Atkins (1925-2019)

Longtime Oxfordian Gertrude “Trudy” Atkins passed away on March 15, 2019, at the age of 93. Born Gertrude Walton in 1925, she was active in journalism for much of her life. Given a typewriter by her father for her thirteenth birthday, she landed her first reporting job with the Salisbury (North Carolina) *Post* while still in high school. She continued to work for the *Post* while attending Catawba College; she later worked for the *Southern Pines Pilot* while attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After graduating from UNC-CH, she worked for the United States Information Service (later known as the United States Information

Agency) in Europe and in Casablanca. In the fall of 1952 she was part of the national press corps covering Adlai Stevenson’s presidential campaign.

After marrying Emmet Day Atkins, she earned an MFA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For the next eighteen years she served as editor of the UNC-G *Alumni News*. She later worked directly for Dr. William Friday, president of the UNC System. After Dr. Friday’s retirement in 1986 she joined a family business, Southern Trade Publications, which published trade journals. She was active in numerous charitable and civic associations, and kept up a full schedule of activities until 2018. She and her husband, Emmet (who predeceased her), were avid ballroom dancers.

Trudy Atkins was also active in the Oxfordian movement. She served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society for several years in the late 1980s and 1990s. She was instrumental in organizing the 1995 SOS Conference in Greensboro. The *Greensboro News & Record* noted in its obituary, "As an Oxfordian, she is no doubt already appealing to a higher authority to reveal the true identity of the authorship of the works of William Shakespeare."

She is survived by a daughter, a son, three grandchildren, a sister and several nephews.



Trudy Atkins

SOF Research Grant Program: Application Period Is Now Open

Through its Research Grant Program (RGP), the SOF is the only organization in the world that is funding such research. This year, the Board of Trustees has again decided to make up to \$20,000 available, and anticipates awarding from two to four grants.

Applications can be made at any time up to November 30, 2019. The RGP Selection Committee expects to announce its decisions early in 2020. Complete information about submitting grant proposals may be found on the SOF website: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-oxford-fellowship-research-grant-program/>. Below is a summary of key provisions:

- Grant recipients must be (or must become) members of the SOF.
- New, unpublished applicants will be preferred to encourage new researchers.
- Financial need will be taken into account if noted on the application.
- Grant applicants must focus on a specific topic for research, and not general research. Applicants

must outline a specific plan of action, identify the expected results, and how this will advance Oxfordian and Shakespeare Authorship studies. Applicants must have pre-researched the topic, feeling confident of expected results. Applicants must already have information about the archives involved, verified access to use them, know the time when the archives are open, etc. If archives are in a foreign language (Latin, Italian, etc.), competence is required. Proposals for "outreach" activities (i.e., efforts to bring the authorship issue to academic, youth, or other communities) will not be funded under the Research Grant Program. Such proposals should be directed to the SOF's Outreach Committee.

- Grantees will be expected to complete their research within nine months of receiving their grant award, and are required to submit a written report to the SOF Board of Trustees within the following three months. If no written report is submitted, no further consideration for future grants applications will be considered. A summary of the project will be published in one of the SOF publications, whether or not the project achieved the expected results.

SOF Research Grant Program Donations Are Requested for New Grants

by Joan Leon

Since 2014, the SOF Research Grant Program (RGP) has funded numerous investigations into the life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and other aspects of the Shakespeare authorship question. Grantees have explored a wide range of topics pertaining directly to de Vere's life, uncovering sources of allusions in the plays and poems, and revealing new information about the scientific, economic and artistic environments that influenced him. The answers to these questions will help us build a composite picture of the man and the times, and will add to the direct and circumstantial evidence that confirms Oxford's authorship of the Shakespeare canon.

Because the SOF is the only organization in the world that is funding research focused on the Shakespeare authorship question, it is crucial that we continue to support the RGP. What our grantees find is not always positive. Sometimes it exposes what might be an effort to conceal material relating to Oxford. Research in official Italian archives last year revealed a dearth of documents relating to Oxford's movements in Italy, suggesting that they had been destroyed or concealed in some way, or perhaps that Oxford traveled incognito. Very few records have been found of his movements among the various Italian independent states that we know he visited.

We are looking forward to what we expect to be exciting results from the most recent grant cycle. Two grantees are pursuing further research in Italian archives. Another is preparing a detailed inventory of Oxfordian materials stored in the Special Collections Room in the library at Brunel University in London. Finally, an instructor in Russian Studies at Stanford will be combing the Russian State Archives in Moscow this summer. She expects to find documents referring to Oxford in the Russian-English diplomatic records of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras.

We are hoping to have \$20,000 to distribute in the next round of research grants. The grants will provide partial support to those proposals that our peer review process deems most likely to uncover new information or lead to increased attention to the subject.

This is the time of year when we make our annual appeal, so we ask members and friends to be as generous as possible (donate online or use the enclosed flyer). Our donation goal is \$10,000, which the SOF once again has agreed to match, making a total of \$20,000 available. We cannot do this without your support. We also ask you to share information about our Research Grant Program with scholars, graduate students working in related fields, teachers, theater people, and the general public. This will ensure that we have a strong and diverse pool of proposals to choose from. Thank you for your help.



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VERITAS PUBLICATIONS *Bringing Hidden Truths to Light*

Books Available Now

J. Thomas Looney
"Shakespeare" Identified (1920/2018)
 Centenary Edition edited by J. Warren (\$23)



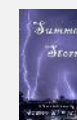
J. Thomas Looney
*"Shakespeare" Revealed: The Collected
 Articles and Published Letters of J.
 Thomas Looney*
 53 shorter post-"Shakespeare" Identified
 pieces collected and introduced by
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Esther Singleton
*Shakespearean Fantasias: Adventures in
 the Fourth Dimension* (1929/2019)
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James A. Warren
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 tale about the perils of ideological
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Forthcoming

James A. Warren
*John Thomas Looney and "Shakespeare" Identified:
 The 100th Anniversary of the Book that is
 Revolutionizing Shakespeare Studies*
 (February 2020)

James A. Warren (editor)
*Oxfordian Letters & Shakespeare Fellowship
 Circulars 1920-1945: The First 25 Years of the
 Oxfordian Movement as Told Through the Written
 Communications of the First Generations of
 Oxfordians*
 (February 2020)

James A. Warren
*John Thomas Looney and His Worlds: A Biography
 of a Most Unusual Man*
 (Fall 2020)

In Progress

James A. Warren
*An Index to Oxfordian Publications: Including Oxfordian
 Books and Selected Articles from non-Oxfordian
 Publications.* Fifth Edition

Girolamo Cardano
*Cardanus Comforte, Translated into English
 and published by commandement of the Right
 Honourable the Earle of Oxenforde (1576)*
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Dorothy Ogburn
*Elizabeth and Shakespeare: England's Power
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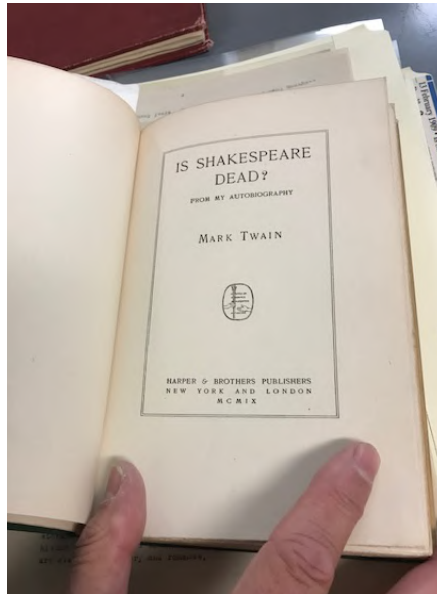
Mark Twain's Manuscript of *Is Shakespeare Dead?* at the UC-Berkeley Bancroft Library

by Joan Leon

With an eye toward our annual conference in October, SOF President John Hamill, my husband Ramon Jiménez, and I visited the Mark Twain Center in the Bancroft Library at the University of California-Berkeley in late February. Our mission was to see if the Center would like to participate in the conference.

We had a very cordial meeting with Bob Hirst, the Center's long-term director. We told him about our exploration into the Shakespeare authorship mystery and how it led to an interest in Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?*, explaining that Twain was one of the hundreds of famous literary thinkers and writers, educators and civic leaders who were convinced that the traditional William Shakspeare story was a hoax. We informed him that we were holding the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship's annual conference at the Mark Twain Home and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut, to reacquaint members and the general public with Twain's deep interest in the topic.

We had not planned to bring up the recent correspondence between the SOF and the Bancroft. In May 2016 the SOF had written the Center (which is in the process of publishing an online archive of all of Twain's writings), expressing its concern that the Center was not planning to publish *Is Shakespeare Dead?* as part of Twain's autobiography (see *Newsletter*, Summer 2016, p. 5). Hirst himself brought up the subject, telling us that he was aware of our letter; he assured us that *Is Shakespeare Dead?* would be published by the Center, but that there was conflicting evidence about whether Twain had intended it to be part of his autobiography. Since our interest was in the Center's possible involvement in the conference and future collaborative opportunities, we did not pursue it further.

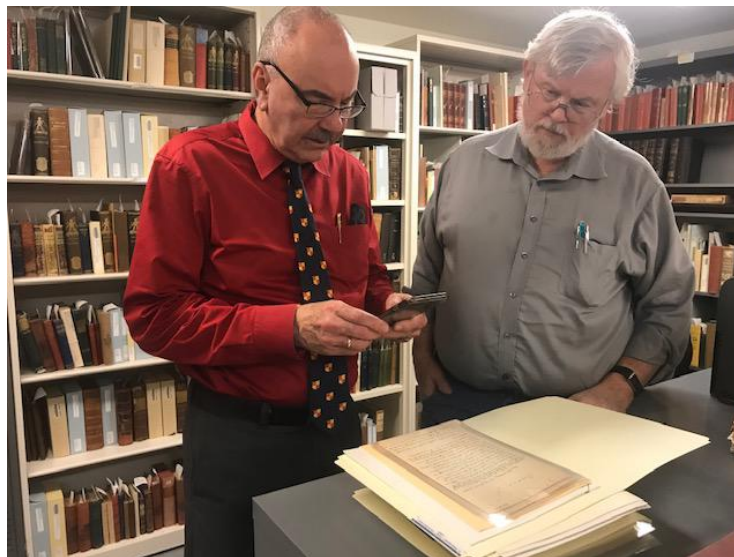


Hirst said the Center was on the verge of a major, new grant, which meant that there were very few staff and consultants there at the moment. He was glad to have our materials, including Ramon's book, *Shakespeare's Apprenticeship* (which he said he was particularly interested in reading). He would let his researchers and consultants know about the conference and the call for papers and report back to us.

Hirst then gave us a tour of the large, separately locked and climate-controlled vault, which was filled with manuscripts, books, letters and memorabilia

bequeathed to the University by Twain's last surviving daughter, Clara Clemens Samossoud, or collected since then. Included were fifty of Twain's notebooks between 1855 and 1910, 30,000 letters, chapters he wrote but decided to leave out, almost all the books he published, about a tenth of his published sketches, essays, editorials, speeches, and poems, clippings, scrapbooks, interviews, bills, receipts, contracts, photographs and objects. In addition to what is physically at the Bancroft, the Center maintains an online collection of more than 31,000 catalog records, 2,600 edited letters, and complete copies of the books and texts that the Center has critically reconstructed, uncensored and annotated so far.

Of particular interest to us, of course, was the fact that the Bancroft Library owns the typewritten manuscript of *Is Shakespeare Dead?* The other major collection of Twain material is at Syracuse University, given to it by Cyril Clemens, a distant cousin and biographer of Twain. Smaller collections are at the University of Texas at Austin, Vassar College, and Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Hirst asked us to extend to our members an invitation to



John Hamill and Bob Hirst

visit the collection at the Bancroft Library and to utilize it online. For more information, see <http://www.marktwainproject.org>.

SOF Conference in Hartford: The Inside Scoop

by Don Rubin, Hartford Conference Coordinator

As most people know, the SOF's next Annual Conference is to be held October 17-20 at the Mark Twain House and Museum in Hartford, Connecticut. For those still trying to decide if they are coming, here are a few words about the events being planned to help you make up your mind. If you are already registered, here's a look at what you'll be finding there.

Some Background

In the 19th century, Hartford was the largest and most important city between New York and Boston. At just under 200,000 people, the city was the center of the American insurance industry and the home to two of America's greatest writers—Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and Mark Twain, author of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*—and the stage star William Gillette. Indeed, they all lived literally within a stone's throw of one another.

Hartford today, like many American cities, has had its downtown core hollowed out with many of its still affluent citizens moving to the suburbs, leaving the center of this proud and beautiful city rather quiet in the evenings. But far from silent, Hartford still has its share of theatres, museums and restaurants.

The Venue, the Tours and the Sessions

Our conference venue is, of course, the splendid and world-famous Mark Twain House and Museum. All official sessions will be held in the Museum's impressive 175-seat theater with coffee breaks, lunches and receptions scheduled for the lobby area just outside the auditorium. Located between an exhibition room of Twain memorabilia and a small screening room showing Ken Burns's evocative 23-minute documentary about Twain's life (shown on a loop so people can drop in anytime to catch it), there is also a well-stocked Twain bookstore on the same level. And yes, it does carry the Oxford Press edition of Twain's *Is Shakespeare Dead?*

On the second floor of the modern museum building is another smaller exhibition room as well as a café selling sandwiches, sweets and drinks.

The Twain House itself—across the lawn from the museum—is a 19th century architectural masterpiece designed and built for Twain and his family. Dubbed by *National Geographic* as America's answer to Downton Abbey, the house was the family home from 1874 to 1891, a period during which he wrote some of his most important works including the aforementioned *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

The Museum itself offers 45-minute guided tours of the home throughout the day (limited to groups of about fifteen) which normally cost \$20 per person. Private guided tours of the House are scheduled for all conference attendees between 5:30 and 7:30 P.M. on Saturday, October 19. For attendees, the tour is included in their registration package at no additional cost.

For those waiting to take their tour (and for those returning from the tour), the conference will offer a reception in the lobby area from 5:45 to 7:45 P.M. It will include a baked potato station (with all the toppings), a dessert table, coffee, tea and a cash bar.

Why are the tours scheduled at that particular time? Because following the tour/reception will be one of the conference's highlights—a live performance of Keir Cutler's highly acclaimed one-man show, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* Tickets to the show are also included in the conference package, with additional tickets available for \$20. Any remaining tickets will be sold to the public by the Twain House as part of the SOF's outreach efforts. The show will be followed by a short question and answer session with Keir Cutler.

Official conference sessions—with exact details and paper titles still to be finalized—will be held from 1 to 5:30 P.M. on Thursday, October 17, from 9 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. on Friday and Saturday, and from 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. on Sunday.

As usual, an official opening reception will take place after the Thursday papers from 5:30 to 7 P.M., with finger food and drinks offered. A sandwich lunch is included on Friday, and a buffet lunch is offered on Saturday. Sunday's closing banquet—also included in the package—will include a full hot and cold buffet along with a cash bar. Complimentary coffee breaks (coffee, tea, cold drinks) are scheduled during each morning and afternoon session.

The Hotel

We've chosen the Homewood Suites by Hilton Hartford Downtown (338 Asylum Street) as our home in Hartford because it is one of the closest hotels to the Twain House and because of the great rate offered to us of \$149 a night (single or double). Rates at this venue are normally as high as \$400 a night. Each room is indeed a suite and includes free wi-fi and a hot breakfast daily. It is probably also worth joining Hilton Honors (no charge) to collect points and to get free bottles of water during your stay.

At press time, a limited number of rooms are still available at the hotel. Book as soon as possible using our link included under "Lodging" here: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/2019-sof-conference/>.

If you can't get a room at Homewood Suites, the nearby Capitol Hotel, one block away at 440 Asylum Street, is offering a limited number of rooms at the same \$149 price for the four nights of October 16-19. To book, call the hotel at (959) 888-3000. Tell them you would like to book for the Shakespeare Oxford Fellowship

conference at the “group rate” and give them the specific dates. If there is any question, tell them that the rate was arranged by the hotel manager, Cheryl Leblanc. You can also e-mail them with the same request at GM.CT163@choicehotels.com. If you have any problems booking a room for the conference, contact Don Rubin at drubin@yorku.ca.

For those coming to Hartford on Wednesday night or earlier, the hotel offers a free wine and cheese reception from 5 to 7 P.M. Homewood Suites also offers outdoor parking behind its building for \$16 a night. If the lot is filled up at any point (it is usually fairly empty after 5), keys can be left with the attendant and they will take care of your car until a space opens up. If you are driving to the Twain House, parking there is free.

Because the Twain House and Museum is located about a mile from Hartford’s downtown, we have arranged shuttle buses for those without cars from the hotel to the Twain House and back starting forty-five minutes before the beginning of each day’s program. The shuttle will slow down at various points during the day and will pick up in frequency again near the end of each morning or afternoon session. The ride from the hotel is less than five minutes and the shuttle bus service is also included in the conference fee.

For anyone wishing to return to the hotel at other times, Hilton Homewood Suites has its own ten-person van which will also be available to us free throughout the conference. Taxis and even Uber are also available for between \$6 and \$10 a ride (less if shared).

For those who want to discover Hartford, the hotel itself is within easy walking distance of the impressive Connecticut State House, which is surrounded by a park. The beautiful Trinity College campus is a ten-minute drive away. The unusual wood carvings in the Trinity Chapel are worth a visit.

Restaurants and More

There are some excellent restaurants around the hotel, ranging from a Cajun jazz house right next door to a higher-end steak and seafood house called Max Downtown and a fine Spanish tapas restaurant called Porro within two streets. There’s also a Starbucks nearby. A full list of local restaurants and sites will be included in each conference kit.

We are looking into the possibility of putting together a visit to the Harriet Beecher Stowe House—well worth the time—just across from the Twain.

The program committee will be announcing a preliminary list of speakers and paper titles in the next *Newsletter*. First call for conference papers is June 1. Final call is August 1. Proposals should be submitted to Earl Showerman at earlees@charter.net.

Registration forms for the conference itself can be found on the SOF website. Discounted prices are offered to SOF members along with a second discount for booking early.

See you in Hartford!

Advertisement

Available from Laugwitz Verlag

New!

A. Bronson Feldman

Early Shakespeare

Edited by Warren Hope (2019)

Feldman, a scholar with wide-ranging interests, uses biographical, historical and psychological approaches to analyze Shakespeare’s first ten plays. The result is a book that sheds light not only on the plays themselves, but also on their author, the court of Elizabeth, the conflicts of the time, and the culture of the period. Though completed just prior to Feldman’s death in 1982, this book is a major contribution to the scholarship associated with J. Thomas Looney’s discovery that Edward de Vere, the seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was the true author behind the pen name William Shakespeare.

Sten F. Vedi / Gerold Wagner

Hamlet’s Elsinore Revisited (2019)

New discoveries about Shakespeare’s knowledge of Denmark, arising from a thorough analysis of historical documents, confirm the Oxfordian Theory.

Also Available

Gary Goldstein

Reflections on the True Shakespeare

Edited by Gary Goldstein (2016)

Noemi Magri

Such Fruits Out of Italy: The Italian Renaissance in Shakespeare’s Plays and Poems

Edited by Gary Goldstein (2014)

Robin Fox

Shakespeare’s Education: Schools, Lawsuits, Theater and the Tudor Miracle

Edited by Gary Goldstein (2012)

Peter R. Moore

The Lame Storyteller, Poor and Despised

Edited by Gary Goldstein (2008)

These books are available from www.laugwitz.com, and also from the German branch of amazon, at www.amazon.de. New and used copies of some of the older books are also available from amazon in the United States, at www.amazon.com.

3-Minute Video Contest Underway!

The SOF's third annual "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" Video Contest is open. The top three winners will receive cash prizes of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250. The mission of this third annual video contest is to promote evidence that supports reasonable doubt about the Shakespeare Authorship and encourages its discussion. Videos must not exceed three minutes in length and must present an issue that promotes discussion of the Shakespeare authorship question in a format that is entertaining, engaging, and witty.

The deadline for submission is **July 31, 2019**.

For complete rules and how to enter, see: <https://shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/sof-video-contest/>. You can view winners and finalists from the last two years [here](#) and [here](#).

Winners will be announced at the SOF Annual Conference, and online, on October 20, 2019. You must be at least eighteen years old to enter. No purchase is necessary. No fee required. This contest is open to residents of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada (excluding Quebec), Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia.

From the Archives

Ruth Loyd Miller on Republishing Oxfordian Texts in the 1970s

by Bill Boyle

Over the past several years there have been renewed efforts by the SOF to take up the challenge of documenting and archiving the history of the Oxfordian movement. This has come about in part because of the centennial next year of J. Thomas Looney's *"Shakespeare" Identified*, with the SI-100 Committee devoted to planning events and commemorations throughout the year (see page 17 of this issue), and also through the efforts of the Data Preservation Committee. The DPC is working on plans to save and archive websites, and to identify, catalog and preserve collections of papers and books held by aging Oxfordian scholars. James Warren's *Index to Oxfordian Publications* (now in its fourth edition) has also been part of this recent process, as has been the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library's [Shakespeare Online Authorship Resources \(SOAR\)](#) catalog/database, the online, searchable version of the *Index*, which also includes listings of selected materials not in the *Index*; there are presently more than 7,500 entries in SOAR, many with direct links to the full texts. Readers of the *Newsletter*

have seen several recent articles about these plans, including a call for inventories from Oxfordians of what they have on hand, and plans for collecting and saving their papers and book collections after they pass.

As part of these plans it is appropriate to publish some of the more interesting finds in the *Newsletter* from time to time, an occasional "From the Archives" column that will share some past history. The initial item is the following letter from Ruth Loyd Miller about the efforts she and her husband, Minos D. Miller, took in the early 1970s to acquire the publication rights to several key books. Written in 1991, her letter was intended to be read at the 1991 SOS conference in Palm Beach, Florida. I'm not sure if it was read then, since it was not reported in the *Newsletter*'s conference report. I doubt that it was ever published, or even that many knew of its existence. I found it a few months ago while going through the files of the late Betty Sears, contained in one of ten boxes of her papers stored with the New England Shakespeare Oxford Library in Boston. It answers some questions I and others had had for years about the Oxfordian movement in the 1970s, but thought might never see answered. We now have some answers, and a little bit of our history is now filled in.

Ruth Loyd Miller's daughter, Bonner Miller Cutting, recently thanked me for finding it and sharing it with her. She had not seen it before either. She mentioned that she still has on hand several boxes of those books (the two-volume edition of *"Shakespeare" Identified*, *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays*, and *Hundreth Sundrie*

Flowres), and would love to get them into the hands of our current generation of Oxfordians. See the advertisement on the following page.

Ruth Loyd Miller's 1991 Letter to Dorothy Davies

From: Ruth Loyd Miller, Editor
 To: Dorothy Davies — to be read to Society's 1991 Annual Meeting in Palm Beach
 Subject: Preparation of 3rd edition of "*Shakespeare Identified*"

The year was 1970: fifty years following publication of an English schoolmaster's announcement of the discovery of Edward de Vere as the creative genius and personality behind the name "Shakespeare."

The scene was London: M.D. [Minos D. Miller, Ruth's husband] and I were dining with a dozen or so members of the English Shakespeare Authorship Society. Discussion turned to the scarcity and unavailability of books and materials on the Oxford case. Not only had Looney's 1920 edition of "*Shakespeare Identified*" been out of print for years, it had not had many sales in its own time. The unsold copies had been destroyed when a warehouse was destroyed by World War II bombing. Copies of the 1948 American edition could be picked up occasionally in U.S. used-book stores.

Bernard M. Ward's biography, *Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* [London: John Murray, 1928, published privately at Ward's expense] also had only a limited printing and distribution. Few copies of any Oxfordian books were to be found in libraries of English or American universities. Only a few major libraries in the U.S. and England had received or retained copies of the Oxfordian journals, newsletters or quarterlies in which research findings of Oxfordians had been published since 1920.

Among those attending the dinner were the president of the Fellowship, a distinguished barrister, several historians, a retired journalist/book and film critic. The group riveted to attention when someone stated: "It is entirely possible Stratfordians might—should it occur to them—acquire the copyrights of the Looney and Ward books, and then suppress use or republication of them for some time." This unnerving thought evoked considerable discussion and expressions of concern, but produced no plan of action to forestall such a contingency.

M.D. and I mulled this over for a day or so. Before we left London on a tour of de Vere country, we sought information and advice from a firm of solicitors. As a result of this legal consultation we determined it would be wise to forestall the possibility that a Stratfordian would acquire the copyrights. We bought the copyrights to these premier Oxfordian works.

To shorten a long tale, we contacted Looney's two daughters who were still living and purchased the copyrights for the English and American editions of Looney's "*Shakespeare Identified*, *Poems of Edward de*



Ruth Loyd Miller

Vere, and his other writings. When we presented a check to them they said it was the first money ever received for their father's remarkable work — that John Thomas Looney in his lifetime never derived a pence or pound from his discoveries of the true Shakespeare.

Acquiring rights to the literary properties of Bernard R. and Bernard M. Ward, father and son, was more complex and for that task we employed the firm of solicitors. They found that the Ward works had been published on commissions from the authors. John Murray, publisher of the Ward biography, *Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, had no residual or proprietary rights to it. I have a letter from the publishing house so stating.

Bernard R. Ward, the father, had taken as his second wife a lady considerably his junior. Five years after Bernard R. died, his son Captain B.M. Ward married his father's widow, who eventually became the sole heir of both father and son. Our English Society members seemed embarrassed by this dual wife-widow-wife-widowhood and when she died they noted—with genteel reticence—in their Newsletter obituary, only her marriage to the son.

Nevertheless, the heirs and executors for all three decedents had to be tracked down. Some months later the solicitors reported they had located the last executor and secured for us both the copyrights and proprietary rights to all the literary properties of Bernard R and Bernard M. Ward. All this was twenty years ago, 1970-71. At that point in time we did not have plans to republish anything, but were merely taking out insurance for the Oxfordian cause—forestalling the possible

Stratfordian acquisition of rights to these pioneer works. We have never attempted to inhibit free use—or profit in any way from anyone else’s use—of the Looney and Ward works. In fact, we have furnished without charge use of transparencies, photographs and materials, acquired at considerable expense, including a first use in color transparencies we had made of the Welbeck and Gheeraerts portraits.

In 1972 we made the decision to undertake republishing the Looney, Clark and Ward works. But it seemed a shame to come out with mere offset press reprints of the originals without updating them with the authors’ subsequent discoveries, and illustrating and illuminating the works with available facsimiles and color reproduction of de Vere familiars.

Thus began the quest: the time consuming, arduous, and expensive pursuit of owners, archivists, curators, libraries, copyright holders; coordinating arrangements with them and photographers to take photographs. One of our first discoveries was that services of English photographers are *trop cher*. The correspondence filled three file drawers. Item by item we obtained the transparencies and photographs that illustrated, and the materials that amplified, the new two-volume edition of Looney’s “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*, Clark’s *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare’s Plays* and Ward’s *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres*.

“*Shakespeare*” *Identified* and *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare’s Plays* were printed on finest quality acid-free paper. The many four-color reproductions of portraits are on the finest quality enamel paper; portraits are bled to the edge of pages to obtain maximum size. We were only able to reproduce a portion of what was collected, but I think the illustrations, art work, and color portraits in the books would delight Mr. Looney, Mrs. Clark, and Captain Ward. Volume I is virtually three books in one: it contains the reprint of “*Shakespeare*” *Identified*; of Looney’s *Poems of Edward de Vere*; and a chronological summary consisting of sixty-six pages listing incidents of de Vere’s life based on Ward’s biography together with original sources. At the end of volume I, I added a brief biography of John Thomas Looney and a reproduction of the only known photograph of him.

In Volume II we presented a collection of correlated key

findings by Oxfordian researchers spanning the past fifty years. The subtitle for Volume II, “Oxfordian Vistas,” came from a suggestion by Edwin Bjorkman in *The Bookman* (Vol. 51, 1920):

It is impossible [Bjorkman wrote] to do justice to the wealth of evidence collected by Mr. Looney, or to the ingenuity displayed by him in its coordination . . . the most remarkable aspect of his labors is that they affect not only the central problem of William Shakespeare’s relation to the work named after him, but a whole series of literary enigmas that have puzzled every painstaking student of this period for nearly two hundred years. . . . The peculiar thing is that all these problems seem to fall into place and form a consistent picture the moment you accept the theory of Oxford’s connection with the Shakespearian plays. . . . Mr. Looney . . . has opened most promising vistas, and it is to be hoped his leads will be followed up. The days are past when a new Shakespearian theory can be laughed out of court. . . . We should be moved solely by a desire for truth, and nothing that may be helpful in finding it should be despised.



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OXFORDIAN BOOKS FOR SALE!



“*Shakespeare*” *Identified* in 2 volumes by John Thomas Looney

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SOF Research Grant Program

J.T. Looney “*Shakespeare*” Identified Centennial

Podcast Series-Video Contest-Educator & Media Outreach

The dues our organization charges are kept low in order to invite as many members as possible to join us, but that means our treasury can’t always afford the price of greater goals beyond our standard operating costs.

All of the above activities serve as vehicles for making our organization and its mission stronger and better known to the public. They increase the evidence that the Earl of Oxford is the author and greatly expand the visibility of the SOF and the Authorship Question. In addition, they will increase the effectiveness of our organization and lead to an expansion of our membership.

If you’d like to help these efforts, please check the boxes below and return this page with your check or credit card number, or use our secure website to make your gift (click “Donate” on the menu bar). All gifts are unrestricted but the SOF will make every effort to use them for the purposes specified.

- ☐ **SOF Research Grant Program** – Your gift will be matched by the SOF, doubling the amount of your contribution.
- ☐ **J. T. Looney “*Shakespeare*” Identified Centennial** – Your gift that will help the SOF plan and implement the Looney Centennial celebration in 2020.
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“Shakespeare” Identified Centennial Progress Update

Compiled by Kathryn Sharpe

In this report:

- Committee advances Looney’s cause at SOF’s 2018 Oakland Conference
- SI-100 Committee membership doubles
- SAM Day engages Facebook audience with four live talks
- Jim Warren’s research and publications highlight Looney’s accomplishments
- *The Oxfordian* publishes five of Looney’s letters from the *Bookman’s Journal*
- De Vere Society contributes to Looney’s headstone and Lit & Phil Society
- Goals for 2019 (and some for 2020)

Committee advances Looney’s cause at SOF’s 2018 Oakland Conference

New family photos, origin of name

Kathryn Sharpe spoke about her ongoing correspondence with Alan Bodell, Looney’s grandson in Scotland, who found and sent photos of “Jack” Looney with his parents



J. Thomas Looney

and siblings, as well as the handsome school photo shown here. Alan also shared information about the Looney family origins on the Isle of Man, and a family tree going back to 1722. The family history documents the origin of the surname. It is the anglicized form of the Gaelic “O Luanaigh,” meaning a descendent of Luanaigh, a personal name derived from Luan, which means “a warrior.” How appropriate. And by the way, it is pronounced “loo knee.”

Looney revealed as “unknown fighter”

Although J. Thomas Looney appeared to produce only three Oxfordian works in the fifteen-year period after his book *“Shakespeare” Identified* was published in 1920, he did not, in fact, turn away from Oxfordian work. Jim Warren uncovered fifteen letters Looney wrote in 1920 and 1921 to editors of publications that had run reviews critical of his book, showing that Looney was intensely engaged in defending himself and his ideas from the attacks in those reviews, and in further substantiating the validity of the Oxfordian claim. Looney wrote that he had “exposed himself to as severe an ordeal as any writer has been called upon to face.” It is now apparent that John Thomas Looney was a fighter—mild mannered on the outside, perhaps, but with a spine of steel inside. Warren’s presentation describes how Looney defended the Oxfordian claim, newspaper by newspaper, journal by journal, during that difficult first year. Warren’s presentation can be seen on YouTube here: <http://tinyurl.com/y5yagmqh>

Brainstorm sparks new ideas, funds, and volunteers for centennial celebration

Bryan H. Wildenthal led attendees in a fast-paced brainstorm of ways the SOF might celebrate Looney and other Oxfordian luminaries who built on his seminal discovery of the identity of Shakespeare. There were lots of ideas, two anonymous donations totaling \$1,100 for centennial publicity, several slogan and t-shirt suggestions, as well as volunteers who promised to work to pull off local events during what we’re coming to think of as “The Year of ‘Shakespeare’ Identified.”

SI-100 Committee expands

Oxfordian Bob Meyers said, “The anniversary of the founding document of the Oxfordian movement is an absolutely critical moment that should not be underplayed in any way; it’s extraordinary. We are talking together because of the publication ninety-eight years ago of Looney’s book. Without that book, we’re

not here, and the Stratfordians could go on their fantastical way. It's a critical moment." A lot of people agree, and are bringing new energy, skills, and ideas to the SI-100. We are pleased to welcome **eight new committee members**: John Hamill (SOF president), Joella Werlin, Linda Bullard, Catherine Hatinguais, Bob Meyers, Earl Showerman, Kevin Gilvary, and Stewart Wilcox.

SAM Day engages Facebook audience with four live talks

SOF's second annual Shakespeare Authorship Mystery (SAM) Day successfully experimented with Facebook Live broadcasting to offer live video and interactive text chat with viewers, as well as the ability to record and share the videos later. Four engaging speakers gave full presentations and provided back and forth discussion with those present:

Ros Barber: "Introduction to the Shakespeare Authorship Question"

Tom Regnier: "The Law in Shakespeare"

Roger Stritmatter: "Seventeen Reasons Oxford Wrote Shakespeare"

Michael Delahoyde: "Shakespeare in Italy"

Their videos received between 700 and 1,000 views each, and you can see them here: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Shakespeare-Oxford-Fellowship-96412830317/videos>

Nov 8

Shakespeare Authorship presentations and Q&A

Facebook LIVE Event

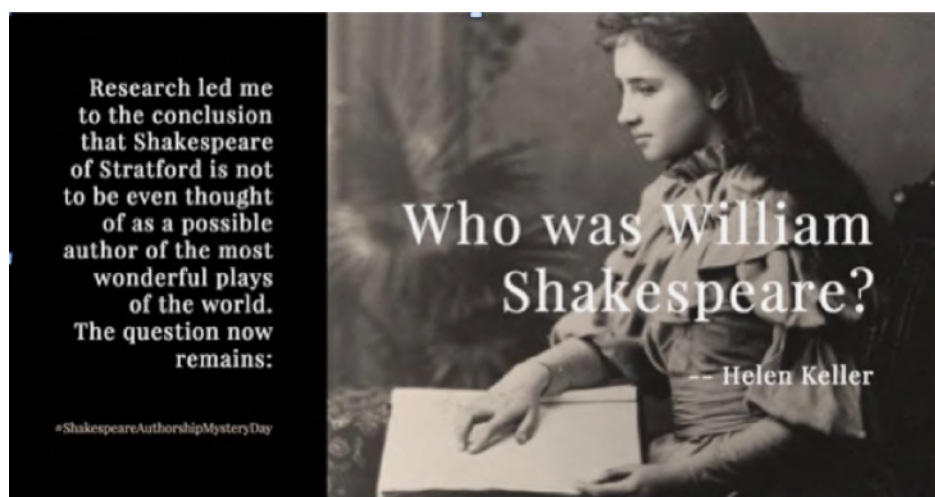
Noon to 5:00 EDT

Bring your questions!

Shakespeare Authorship Mystery Day

Speakers:

- Ros Barber - noon
- Tom Regnier - 1:30
- Roger Stritmatter - 3
- Michael Delahoyde - 4

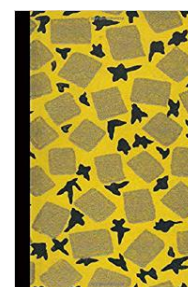
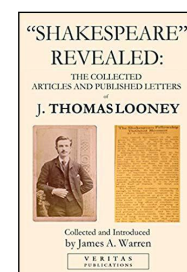
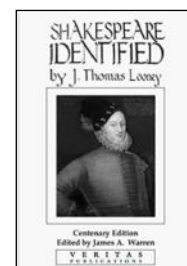


On November 8, the SOF had 6,000 Facebook views, far higher than the average of up to 500 a day. SAM Day is an opportunity to expand our reach and hone our message, for example, to experiment to learn how to "meme" the Authorship Question in a way that speaks to the uninitiated. We welcome new ideas about activities and communications for this annual event.

Jim Warren's 2018-2019 research and publications highlight

Looney's accomplishments

In 2018, Jim Warren continued his research into the life of J. Thomas Looney and the early years of the Oxfordian movement with visits to the British Library and the Oxfordian archives at Brunel University. That research revealed that Looney had published fifty-three shorter pieces after the publication of "*Shakespeare Identified*" in response to reviews of the book and to present new information uncovered since it had been published (forty-two of those pieces are "new," only eleven had been known of in the middle of 2017). That research resulted in the publication of three Oxfordian texts: The annotated Centenary Edition of "*Shakespeare Identified*," which identifies the sources of more than 230 passages from other works that were cited in the original edition; "*Shakespeare Revealed*" (reviewed on p. 24), an annotated collection of Looney's fifty-three shorter pieces; and an annotated modern edition of Esther Singleton's novel, *Shakespearean Fantasias* (reviewed on p. 30), in which characters from



several Shakespeare plays come to life with distinctly Oxfordian personalities.

Jim continued his research in 2019, thanks to a grant from the SOF's Research Grant Program, returning to London for further research at Brunel University, the British Library and the University of London. In those libraries he found more than thirty letters Looney sent to prominent Oxfordians of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as some 2,000 items of Oxfordian ephemera, including dozens of issues of Shakespeare Fellowship (SF) *Circulars* that Col. Bernard R. Ward sent to members to keep them informed of research findings and Oxfordian publications.

This work will result in several publications in the coming year. By summer 2019, Jim Warren will have completed a database of the contents of the De Vere Society Archives and the Shakespeare Fellowship/Shakespearean Authorship Trust Archives, both housed at Brunel University, and the Katharine E. Eggar archives housed at the University of London's Senate House Library. He expects to complete two books by the hundredth anniversary of the publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* on March 4, 2020: *John Thomas Looney and "Shakespeare" Identified: The 100th Anniversary of the Book that is Revolutionizing Shakespeare Studies*; and a collection of the full texts of more than 200 letters and SF *Circulars* titled *Oxfordian Letters and SF Circulars 1920-1945: The First 25 Years of the Oxfordian Movement as Told Through the Written Communications of the First Generations of Oxfordians*. He is also at work on a biography of Looney, *John Thomas Looney and His Worlds: A Biography of a Most Unusual Man*, set to be published before the 2020 SOF Conference.

The Oxfordian publishes five of Looney's letters from the *Bookman's Journal*

The Oxfordian 20 (2018) published five important letters written by J. Thomas Looney to *The Bookman's Journal* in England in the early 1920s, which center on the literary reception of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*. Rediscovered by Jim Warren and hitherto unknown to scholars, they defend the methods that Looney employed in his research and the accuracy of his findings.

De Vere Society contributes to Looney's headstone and Lit & Phil Society

England's De Vere Society contributed £500 in 2018 to memorialize John Thomas Looney. The gift had two recipients: Looney's grandson accepted funds to help pay for his share of the accurate granite headstone and surround marking the grave of John Thomas Looney and his wife, Elizabeth; and the Literary & Philosophical

Society in England, where Looney did his research for "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*, received funds to purchase books on the authorship question. The DVS and the SOF are putting together lists of books to purchase and donate to the library.

Goals for 2019 (and some for 2020)

- Stay in touch with J. T. Looney's descendants.
- Implement memorials at the Newcastle Literary & Philosophical Society.
- Assist with publicity for Jim Warren's books and related materials.
- Leverage SAM day to explore social media and connect with other doubters.
- Raise funds to support and publicize centennial year events.
- Stay in touch with Oxfordian and doubter groups worldwide about their plans for the centennial.
- In coordination with efforts to locate the research materials of Looney and other early Oxfordians, continue working with the Data Preservation Committee to find, inventory, and archive valuable historic materials.
- Propose presentations and a panel for the 2019 Hartford Conference.
- Plan an event in a major US city in March 2020 to mark the centennial of the publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified*.
- Focus on Looney and his important early followers at the 2020 Conference in Ashland, Oregon.

About the SI-100 Committee

We are coordinating a powerful celebration of the 100-year anniversary of J. T. Looney's publication of "*Shakespeare*" *Identified* in 2020, using the SOF website, social media, publications, and annual conference. We encourage Oxfordians to create and implement their ideas to celebrate locally, and we will help them publicize their events using SOF resources.

Get involved:

Volunteer to help the SI-100 Committee.
Follow us on Twitter: @ShakesOxFellows #2020Looney
Ask to be put on our email list for news updates.

Contact us:

Web: <http://www.shakespeareoxfordfellowship.org/shakespeare-identified-100/>

Email: 2020looney@gmail.com



Marketing Ourselves to the Public

by Julie Sandys Bianchi, Joan Leon, Shelly Maycock and Kathryn Sharpe

Longtime Oxfordians are conscious of the fact that the survival of our movement depends on attracting new and younger audiences. To that end, the SOF Board of Trustees decided, at its meeting during the 2018 Conference in Oakland, to increase its capital outlay in 2019 in order to fund a more aggressive approach to public outreach. The following is a report on the projects underway and ones we would like to continue in 2020 with the help of donations such as those that can be made using the flyer inserted with this newsletter.

Media Relationships and Speakers Bureau

As reported in the previous issue of the *Newsletter*, in October 2018 we invested in the part-time services of an experienced PR and marketing expert, Steven Sabel, to help us grow and improve our media relationships. Since then, Steven has been working to keep the general public informed about the ongoing research, organizational activities, and special events conducted by our membership through the expansion of our media contact list and by increasing the frequency of press releases sent to them. He has taken on the promotion of our Speakers Bureau too, ensuring that their efforts are publicized in local markets whenever a speaker is booked for a presentation. See his report on page 3 of this issue.

Podcast Series

Wearing another hat in his role as avid Oxfordian, Steven Sabel has been volunteering as the host of our podcast series, "Don't Quill the Messenger: Revealing the Truth of Shakespeare Authorship" (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/dont-quill-messenger-revealing-truth-shakespeare-authorship/id1448226390>). The shows are produced by a professional sound engineer and are recorded live at a studio in Burbank, California, or remotely via Skype from other locations.

You can help boost the popularity of our series by listening and leaving a rating/review, because shows with demonstrable listenership are selected to receive extra promotion by their respective podcast outlets. And, your donations to the SOF can help us expand our podcast program and continue funding a professional PR consultancy in the coming year.

Video Contest

For the third year of our "Who Wrote Shakespeare?" Video Contest, the organizing committee, headed by Tom Regnier, was able to widen the field of competition

for the cash prizes to contestants from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Canada (excluding Quebec). This year's contest is already underway and runs until the end of July. The winning entries will be announced and screened at the SOF Conference in October. See page 14 of this issue.

Informational Booths at Conferences

Introducing the Authorship Question from a booth in an exhibit hall can be an effective way to put an Oxfordian perspective directly into the hands of key influencers of educational content, but this is a tactic the SOF hasn't pursued in several years because of the cost.

In November 2019 the National Council of Teachers of English will hold its Annual Convention in Baltimore. This is the largest American gathering of kindergarten-through-college educators who teach English and Language Arts, often including theater. If funding can be secured for this project, Dr. Roger Stritmatter and Professor Shelly Maycock have volunteered to compile and edit for use by teachers a booklet of resources on the authorship question. They and other Oxfordian volunteers would work the booth in person, promoting our organization and its mission. Outlays for booth rentals, materials, hotel accommodations and travel can quickly exceed our budget, but with your help as a volunteer participant and/or donor, we could have a presence at this event and others like it.

"Shakespeare" Identified Centennial Event

The SOF plans a major celebration of the hundredth anniversary of J. Thomas Looney's groundbreaking book, *"Shakespeare" Identified*. Celebration events will kick off this fall at the SOF Conference in Hartford, ahead of launching in Spring 2020 a year-long effort to bring attention to J. Thomas Looney, the British author, educator, and scholar who began the Oxfordian movement, as well as to showcase Oxfordian Jim Warren's masterful restoration and annotation of Looney's original work, along with his newest discoveries of Looney's original articles in defense of his Oxfordian thesis.

The SOF and the SI-100 planning committee welcome financial contributions and additional volunteers to assist with this important work aimed at increasing the public profile of the SOF and the Oxfordian position in Shakespeare authorship studies. Please forward your contributions to the SOF or contact SI-100 Committee Chair Kathryn Sharpe for details on how to assist.

You may donate online or use the flyer enclosed with this issue.



Book Reviews

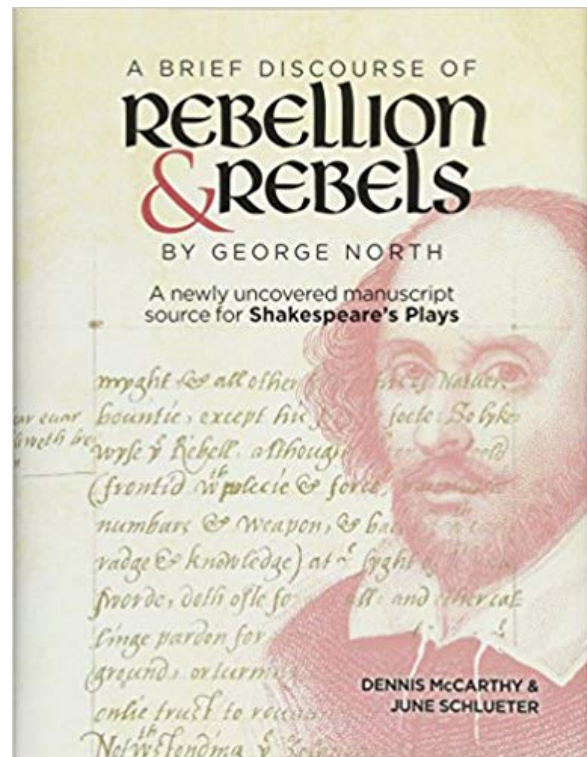
Dennis McCarthy and June Schlueter,
"A brief discourse of rebellion and rebels" by George North: a newly uncovered manuscript source for Shakespeare's plays; 2018; Cambridge: D.S. Brewer in association with the British Library; 266 pgs.

Reviewed by W. Ron Hess

Imagine if the headline in the *New York Times Book Review* on February 7, 2018, had read: "Plagiarism Software Reveals 11 of Shakespeare's Plays Were Written by 1576; Stratfordians Agog While Oxfordians Declare Total Exoneration, Demand Apologies and Reparations." It would have shocked the world because it would have shown that at least five of Shakespeare's greatest plays, along with six others, had all been written by the time William of Stratford was an unschooled boy of twelve. It would be unbelievable that he was the author. Instead, the *Times Book Review* went with a more tepid headline: "Plagiarism Software Unveils a New Source for 11 of Shakespeare's Plays." But please read on to see why I argue that the fake headline would have been more appropriate for what the *Times* really described.

I urge all Oxfordians to read Dennis McCarthy and June Schlueter's *"A brief discourse of rebellion and rebels" by George North: A Newly Uncovered Manuscript Source for Shakespeare's Plays*, even if you have to pay big money on Amazon.com, or at least borrow a copy from your nearest research library. I don't fully understand or necessarily agree with the book's tenets, but I forecast that it is but a taste of the wonders yet to come from our Stratfordian friends. (The book was also the subject of an article by Bill Boyle, "New Source for Shakespeare Leads to the Same Old Problems," in the Spring 2018 issue of the *Newsletter*.)

Having despaired of coming up with a legitimate biography for their William of Stratford, our friends are now resorting to "computer-assisted techniques" that can read the mind of the Bard and ferret out his inner bardness in new ways. Meanwhile, college professors have been receiving suspiciously familiar papers from their students, and so software manufacturers have created "black boxes" that can take customers' entered parameters and run them against readily available commercial databases to prove that wayward students have been cheating by lifting material from other sources. Put these two movements together and you have a perfect marriage of ignorance meeting bliss. The result will be more and more computer geeks becoming lords of Shakespeare research and interpretation simply by devising software and database mining techniques that give their bosses exactly what they always wanted to



find, and, despite lack of evidence, have always intended that they had to find.

I predicted as much two decades ago in "Hotwiring the Bard into Space," *The Oxfordian* I (1998). No one heeded my call to action. Now in the era of "Expert Systems," "Artificial Neural Networks" (ANNs), and other whiz-kid computer techniques from our Stratfordian friends, we have been left defenseless, unable to test their results, question the authority of their computer systems, or deploy rival techniques of our own.

That the *Times* review of McCarthy's book cites an ebullient opinion by Michael Witmore, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, might be ominous for us. I had attended a seminar at the University of Georgia in 2015, at which Dr. Witmore demonstrated something that his computer geeks had put together to show, via a clumping of Shakespeare-related data items, that the Bard was active precisely from 1590 to 1611. A finding that we might have expected from any Stratfordian was now being attributed to "an infallible computer." (We also attended an acting class together in which we acted several versions of the same scene of *Romeo and Juliet*, wherein young Dr. Witmore proved to be a far better impromptu actor than yours truly.)

The author of the 1576 MS under examination by independent researcher Dennis McCarthy and Professor June Schlueter is George North (fl. 1561-1581), a minor courtier, translator, and ambassador to Scandinavian realms; he was a cousin of the more famous Sir Thomas North. Per McCarthy, in 1576 both Norths were living at

Kirtling Hall (near Cambridge and not far from Castle Hedingham), which was the estate of Roger North, 2nd Baron North, while Thomas was translating Plutarch's *Lives*, a major source for Shakespeare's Roman plays. McCarthy's implication is that Shakespeare "must have" encountered the North clan in some unexplained way, and, in an even more unexplained way, have photographically remembered or obtained an unknown copy of the subject MS, for his use two decades later while writing his plays.

Is that implication even viable? Is it the only viable theory? Courtiers, of course, had ready access to entertainments performed at court, which came under the purview of the Lord Chamberlain and his subordinate, the Master of Revels. Studies of the Mastership of the Revels (e.g., W.R. Streitberger, 2016, *Masters of the Revels*, especially pp. 96-136) will show that from 1573 to about 1578, when the Lord Chamberlain was Thomas Radcliffe, Earl of Sussex, he had a very "hands-on" approach to running the Revels Mastership. Poor health forced Sussex in 1578 to turn over Revels duties to Master Edward Tilney (a distant relative) and his wider duties to his Deputy Lord Chamberlain, Charles, Baron Howard of Effingham, another Sussex relative who happened to be a second cousin of the Queen (Effingham was also Deputy Lord Admiral through most of the 1570s). In 1584 Effingham would succeed to the Lord Chamberlainship until 1585, when that post was taken by his father-in-law, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, a first cousin or half-brother of the Queen, allowing Effingham to take the vital post of Lord Admiral, in which office three years later he would defeat the Spanish Armada. It was "all in the family!"

In 1576, any plays at court, or in the London vicinity, would have been narrowly scrutinized by Sussex, who was the most strenuous rival in the Privy Council to the schemes of the Queen's primary favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. The Queen's most trusted minister, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, more often than not sided with Sussex. In addition to Leicester backing Puritan interests, opposing royal marriage to any foreign prince, and other vital political matters, in the early 1570s he had mounted a troupe of actors who would act at court and in London. Sussex regulated that after taking the Lord Chamberlain's post in 1573, when he set up a regime in which only a handful of Lords' troupes would be privileged to act in London, and only as practice for royal revels. But that meant that Sussex had to mount his own troupe to fill any additional need; it had to be large enough and talented enough, with lavish sets and costumes, and the best-written texts, all to guarantee that Leicester's Men or any other rival companies couldn't dominate at court or in the London vicinity. On top of all that, Sussex had to balance a budget constantly monitored and crimped by the parsimonious Lord Treasurer Burghley.

This is exactly where the 17th Earl of Oxford fits in. He was a protégé of Sussex and son-in-law of Burghley; he and his second cousin Howard of Effingham were very good friends (evidence shows a close relationship from 1571, when the two were team members in Oxford's first joust, until 1604, when Effingham, by then Earl of Nottingham, was named as executor in a number of Oxford's financial matters). Moreover, one of those serving Sussex in the Revels Office, John Draywater (d. 1597), showed up repeatedly in the records until the early 1590s as a servant (and defrauder) of Oxford. Thus, if Sussex and Effingham needed assistance in mounting entertainments, they needed look no further than Oxford. Whether Oxford had written or merely had access to the "old plays" used in 1570s entertainments, he would have been the man to see if George North (or anyone else) wanted copies of a play or of scenes from one. Most Stratfordian scholars admit that Shakespeare's earlier plays in the 1590s were merely reworking of "old plays."

That gets us to the nub of our Oxfordian argument about the George North 1576 MS. Its first page makes clear it was meant to be a present to North's cousin Lord North, likely with the intention that Lord North would further use it as a presentation to the Queen in one of her progresses, thereby drawing royal attention to George. Whether or not a presentation happened, the ploy may have worked, since George did in fact get a minor ambassadorship. Such an appointment would have had to be backed by members of the Privy Council, including Burghley, Sussex, and Effingham.

The thrust of George North's 1576 MS was political history, drawing upon such examples as the Jack Cade revolt of the 1300s. But its object was to show off George's wide-ranging talents in translation and knowledge of foreign and classical venues and philosophies, thus making it even more likely to have sought out the acquaintance of Burghley's son-in-law and Sussex's protégé, the Earl of Oxford. In short, whether as a hanger-on at Court, or a dabbler in the politics of foreign affairs, George would have likely wished to benefit from acquaintance with Oxford and with Oxford's 1575-76 travels to the Continent.

That's the "common source" that McCarthy was unable to locate when his databases turned up no such thing. The "common source" wasn't a published document. Rather, it consisted of private conversations, private writings, and exclusive presentations at Court or in semi-private venues such as Blackfriars. That's the cauldron out of which came "the old plays," two decades later to be reworked into "new plays," and after 1598 redirected as "Shake-speare's" plays.

An interesting twist to this is Thomas Churchyard, whom McCarthy credits with inspiring a number of George North's works, including the title for his 1576 MS, "A Brief Discourse of Rebellion and Rebels." On p. 55, note 38, he credits Churchyard as the source of

the MS's phrase "flesh and fell," since Churchyard was the only writer to have used that phrase both prior to 1576 and after 1590. Of course, we know that Churchyard was listed by Burghley as a servant of Oxford's in the 1560s, and off-and-on apparently remained so until the early 1590s.

Another link between George North and Oxford was the quixotic character of Sir Thomas Stukley, to whom North dedicated his 1561 translation. Stukley was a swashbuckler who worked as a privateer for Oxford's guardian Burghley during the 1560s, when Oxford was living as a ward in Cecil's ever-growing set of mansions. In February 1576 Stukley was in Rome, one of ten leading English expatriate Catholic conspirators who were debating how to overthrow England's Queen, and whom to replace her with. The meeting had been summoned by the Pope and by Cardinal Granville, Don Juan of Austria's lieutenant in Naples. I wrote in Vol. II to my 2003 *The Dark Side of Shakespeare* that I believed that Don Juan (who would have been charged with carrying out any clear decision) and Oxford (who I believe was in Italy as an obvious spy) would have wanted to attend that conference, if only in disguise. Of the ten, only Stukley, financed by the Pope, took up the gauntlet and actually headed an expedition which was meant to invade Ireland. In Portugal he succeeded in derailing the matter for two years by deflecting the would-be invaders to a hopeless crusade into Morocco, where all who followed him were famously killed, and Stukley thereby became a "heroic" legend. But Stukley may have been no less than a spy and saboteur for Cecil, as I believe Oxford actually was (in 1581 Oxford was actually accused of having bragged about the bribes he'd been offered from the Pope, Philip II, and Don Juan in Naples). It's interesting that a man like North, who would later translate in 1581 *Popish Toys* attacking Catholicism, would have been an unwitting link between two likely active English spies in Italy in early 1576.

So, the Stratfordians insist upon their own paradigm, refuse to consider others, and technicians willing to play with computer toys can work their way into the game by serving up what suits the favored paradigm. But the Oxfordian paradigm is to consider all possibilities and to choose those that make the most sense. Such as the son-in-law of England's most powerful minister being sent on an expedition to Spanish Italy, where he acquired important experiences for use in the Shakespeare plays and poetry, which put him in the right (or "write") place at the right time to have written or influenced works that in turn influenced George North's 1576 MS and "Shakespeare's" works.

What plays does McCarthy focus on? He features separate chapters on three plays: *Henry VI Part 2*, *King Lear*, and *Coriolanus*. In his *Times* interview, he expanded this to include *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Henry V*, "and seven other plays," for a stated total of eleven, yet a

tally of thirteen might be what he really had in mind. It's hard to ascertain exactly which plays make up his group of eleven or thirteen. He may have included *Edward III*, which Brian Vickers has insisted was co-authored by Shakespeare, as McCarthy notes. McCarthy's index shows interest in *Henry VI Part I*, *Henry VI Part 3*, *Hamlet*, *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Othello*; *Richard II* may have been a candidate too; so some of those may fill out his group. And there's the matter of *Arden of Faversham*, which he more than once implies is partly by Shakespeare. He can and should clarify the matter, because his book and interview really didn't.

Finally, I submit that we need to know more about the circumstances under which the MS was "discovered." I recall that when Greene's *Groatworth* was first "discovered," there was some controversy, and then seemingly overnight it was accepted by Stratfordians everywhere as a "holy grail" of sorts, even though it never mentions William of Stratford. Then there was Prof. Charles William Wallace of Nebraska, who, before departing for England in the early 1900s, gave a nice speech in which he criticized British academia for not knowing where and how to look for more info about their Bard. Then sure enough he found a virtual "holy grail" himself in the Mountjoy-Belott marriage controversy, which not only "proved" that William of Stratford could scrawl a sixth signature, but could also "arrange a wedding"; that signature (the longest and most legible of the six known signatures) would also be associated with a deposition giving a date, the deposer's full name and age (hence approximate date of birth, which clashes with what's engraved on his tombstone), birthplace in Stratford, and associations with London in both 1604 and 1612. In other words, it contained virtually everything a Stratfordian from Nebraska could have wished to find! Were there unseen angels "dangling holy grails" in those two cases? So, when we look into the circumstances of McCarthy's "discovering" this neglected North MS that supposedly no Stratfordian had earlier seen, might it be suspicious that the following sentence was written in "small caps" in pencil in the British Library catalogue margin? "IT IS EXTREMELY INTERESTING TO COMPARE THIS EARLIER ELIZABETHAN, GEORGE NORTH'S POEMS ON OWEN GLENDOWER AND JACK CADE WITH SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF THE SAME SUBJECT IN RICHARD II. AND HENRY VI., PART II." That was impetus to search for the MS in the first place, finding it despite its having been "misfiled." Am I the only one who sees this as a "GRAIL LIES HERE" sign? The British Library is financing the publication of McCarthy's book. What librarian would not be thrilled to silently stand by and watch as "the holy grail" gets discovered due to hints he/she had been anonymously dropping all along the way (including where it's been hidden)?

In conclusion, eleven (or perhaps thirteen) of Shakespeare's plays (about a third of the canon) seem to have existed in some form by 1576; that form included rare words and phrases in the right order and/or context to credibly match what decades later was used in Shakespeare's canon. Since William of Stratford was too young to have written those progenitor "old plays" by 1576, we should rule him out as the credible author (assuming he could write at all!). But the Earl of Oxford was twenty-six at the time, a wide-ranging, erudite,

multilingual traveler into the same foreign venues most vividly detailed in the canon; many of Oxford's private experiences seem to have made their way into the canon, including the awkward matter of his alleged adventures and treasons with Don Juan of Austria, Spain's most dangerous "war-man," and of Oxford's wife's proclivity for getting pregnant through the very type of "bed-trick" that Shakespeare exclusively favored, as opposed to his contemporary writers. How would McCarthy's system explain them apples?

***"Shakespeare" Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney*
Collected, Introduced and Annotated by James A. Warren (Veritas Publications 2019)**

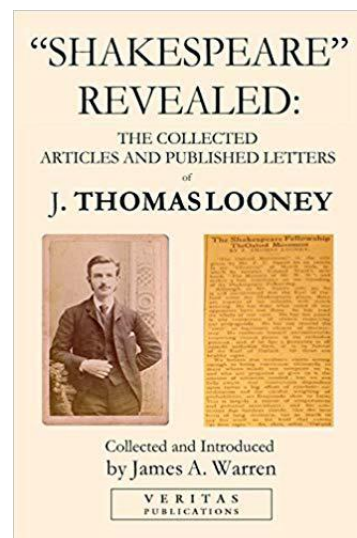
Reviewed by Michael St. Clair

English Literature owes a great debt to J. Thomas Looney, the scholar who originally introduced and articulated the idea that Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, was the author behind the pseudonym "William Shakespeare." Looney's master work was *"Shakespeare" Identified*, published in 1920. Most Oxfordians do not realize that Looney also wrote dozens of shorter pieces, more than fifty articles and letters, the majority of which have never been reprinted.

James A. Warren performs a huge service by seeking, gathering and reprinting these various short pieces in *"Shakespeare" Revealed: The Collected Articles and Published Letters of J. Thomas Looney*. He adds explanatory material about the publications and context wherein the pieces originally were published and often the names and publication information of works to which he was responding. The publications Looney wrote for included academic journals, daily newspapers, monthly periodicals, and literary and general magazines. In his Introduction Warren explains the sleuth work required to unearth these valuable writings, which had remained unknown and out of sight for decades.

Looney writes well and forcefully. Reading these pieces will reward knowledgeable Oxfordians because they frequently expand arguments originally contained in *"Shakespeare" Identified*. But surprises also await the reader as Looney continued to think and research and offer additional arguments and evidence as to Oxford's authorship. What I most appreciated was Looney's ability to crisply state his argument, followed by a summary of the evidence.

Why is it important to know who really wrote the Shakespeare literary corpus? Looney answers that



question succinctly: "Truly great dramatic literature can only come from the pens of writers who are accustomed to look closely into their own souls and make free use of their secret experiences.... The importance of the personality of the writer is therefore in direct proportion to the recognized importance of his work" (274). Considerable details are known of Oxford's life, and Looney capably shows "that all the facts of

Oxford's life fell naturally and spontaneously into their place in relation to the outstanding personae of the plays" (49). We know of key persons in his life, his education, his presence at court; a writer tends to reflect in his work the kinds of people he was familiar with. The Shakespearean plays are all about royalty and aristocrats, not the middle or lower class. William Shakspeare of Stratford was the son of an illiterate and one (possibly both) of his daughters was illiterate; the whole of the essential facts known about the Stratford man can be "written on a sheet of notepaper" (190). We have no evidence that he was familiar with court or aristocrats. How is it plausible that in 1593 with the publication of *Venus and Adonis* such a man "placed himself at a single leap into the forefront of literature, showing himself publicly on intimate terms with the highest of the aristocracy, but leaving not the slightest trace of the steps by which he had risen to such privileged relationships"? (212)

The plays show familiarity with court speech and etiquette that only could have been formed from intimacy with the nobility, not books, yet, over supposedly a "period of nearly thirty years spent in a

public vocation, and in association with the highest social classes . . . the records reveal no single interview, conversation, personal impression or incident, nor a single letter from his pen" (213). At the time of Shakspeare's death the "greatest part of his supposed literary work was still unpublished, yet his will contained no mention of, not even the expression of a wish, respecting these great literary statements" (213). Indeed, no "representative of the Stratford man's family appeared at all in connection with the [1623 publication of the] work, which was dedicated to Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, who had married Oxford's daughter..." (74).

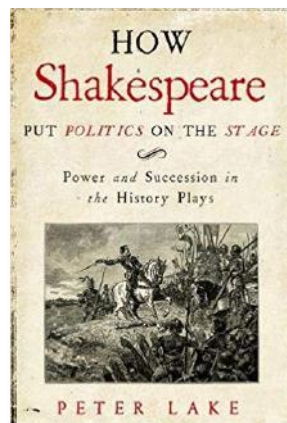
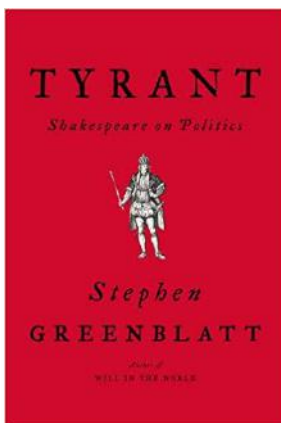
Looney reduces the Shakespeare authorship problem to the only questions that matter: Did William Shakspeare of Stratford write the plays and poems attributed to him, and if he did not, then who did? How did the Stratford man, so little known even to his contemporaries, receive credit? How was it that the Earl of Oxford was immersed in the literary and dramatic movement of the time and was known to and mentioned by his literary peers, but "not a single line of drama under his name has survived, although no less than 556 plays have come down to us from the classic period of English drama" (132)? How do we explain the seeming deliberate secrecy that prevented any writings by Oxford from being made public? After Oxford's first literary output he appears to deliberately have adopted a course of self-effacement, seemingly resolved not to obtrude himself on the public notice—"an extraordinary literary mystery" (89). Others seem to have perpetuated the subterfuge begun by Oxford himself. "None, not Oxford nor those who took

part could possibly have foreseen the vast Stratfordian consequences of this concealment" (233).

Looney's interesting and insightful speculations, expanded from the briefer mentions in "*Shakespeare Identified*", about the great literary outburst of the latter half of Queen Elizabeth's reign, suggest that Oxford may have been inspired as the result of a combined effort of a group of young courtiers and writers. Looney believed that the stimulation on a young mind in contact with kindred spirits greatly fostered innovation and creativity in a way that an isolated young writer poring over books would be unable to achieve (163).

I also found it both impressive, and at times depressing, to read that there were civilized discussions between Looney and traditional Shakespearean scholars who had taken the time to read his book, while there were also the predictable, often simplistic and/or *ad hominem* arguments made by others.

Many Oxfordians will be familiar with much of the material covered by Looney's short pieces. However, many nuggets are there to be discovered and appreciated. Those who have less background will also benefit; hopefully they will be inspired to go directly to the fountainhead, "*Shakespeare Identified*", to read Looney's original organized and sustained process of thinking about the Authorship Question. With the centennial of Looney's groundbreaking book fast approaching, now is a good time for Oxfordians to become familiar with how the case for Oxford developed in its earliest years. James A. Warren has made a valuable contribution to Oxfordian studies.



I. *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics* by Stephen Greenblatt (W.W.Norton Co., 2018)

II. *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays* by Peter Lake (Yale Univ. Press, 2016)

Reviewed by Mike Gansecki

While both works deal with political aspects of Shakespeare's dramas, their goals and approaches differ. I review them separately.



Greenblatt: *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics*

Professor Greenblatt's effort, *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics*, is directed towards the Bard's wondrous ability to individually characterize and present tyrannical rulers or "wannabes" in different plays, with an emphasis on

their relevance today. Greenblatt's unstated but obvious concerns regarding the recent rise of political strongmen worldwide are felt by many of us.

Three Shakespeare characters in particular—Jack Cade, Richard III, and Coriolanus—demonstrate the all too common behaviors of ancient and modern dictators

and tyrants. Cade's murderous attacks on lawyers, law, education and those governing find uncomfortable echoes in Pol Pot and Chairman Mao. Cade's personality comes through as that of a vindictive megalomaniac with a simplistic view of how his economy works. He knows how to stir up the common people, but hasn't a clue of what it means to govern.

Richard III's ruthless machinations, carefully screened by a dissimulating personality, are a textbook on tyrannical behavior of an out-of-control ruler—a loveless childhood, serial murderer, detester of women, expert at playing “the innocent” in public, and a compulsive liar. Greenblatt has an entire chapter on “enablers,” from those simply too frightened to resist, to others who play along thinking they can improve their own fortunes. But, as Shakespeare demonstrates, enablers don't succeed in the face of a tyrant who detests everyone, including his own murderous self.

Coriolanus gives us a glimpse of what an elitist, right-wing dictator contemptuous of the masses would do if elected (unsuccessfully, since his contempt of the “forty-seven percent who do nothing” seals his fate even in the old Roman republic!). Greenblatt also provides us

with revelations of how Macbeth, Lear and Leonatus become tyrannical over time. The latter depictions seem more to illustrate Shakespeare's capacity to realize on the stage other forms of tyranny, than to directly compare them to present-day conditions. Most rulers don't last long under modern democratic systems (although certain dictators like Franco ruled for life). Macbeth starts as a reluctant murderer and tyrant, but is pulled along to his doom through his own misdeeds. As an aged ruler Lear shows his tyrannical self largely in his familial relations, with tragic consequences for the kingdom. Leonatus's male sexual jealousy turns tyrannical before a redemption of sorts occurs.

In any event, kudos to Professor Greenblatt for writing a thoughtful, easily read work. He would agree that Shakespeare speaks to power and human foibles today as much as to the events of his own time. As to how the Bard was so freely allowed to discuss politics on the stage in very troubled times, Greenblatt's explanation is that he wrote the plays from an “oblique angle,” i.e., setting them as former English histories or in other contexts like the Roman republic.



Lake: *How Shakespeare Put Politics on Stage*

From an Oxfordian standpoint, a historian's attempt to link Shakespearean literature to historical conditions should be welcome. Professor Peter Lake is Chair of the History Department at Vanderbilt University. His book, *How Shakespeare Put Politics on the Stage: Power and Succession in the History Plays*, is an ambitious effort and a strenuous read. There are 603 pages of text in small print, condensed quotations, extensive footnotes, no separate bibliography, long elliptical and compound sentences, unfamiliar terms (a British dictionary would be helpful), and a complex formulation of his approach. However, the main thesis—that the release of the Shakespeare history plays in the 1590s coincided with and addressed major political issues of the time—is a topic well worth considering.

For those who don't wish to confront the entire book, I recommend reading Part I first, outlining Lake's approach and relevant history, and the Conclusion. I did not feel competent to judge the merits of literary or historical citations offered by Professor Lake in individual play chapters.

Introduction and Part I. Lake's specialty is the history of Christianity, with emphasis on post-Reformation England during the Tudor-Stuart periods. The focus of his analysis is the series of Shakespeare history plays (loosely defined) covering the time span of the 1590s, following what he believes is their likely order of release or initial presentation: *2 Henry VI*, *3 Henry VI*, *1 Henry VI*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, *King John*,

Richard II, *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Hamlet* and *Troilus and Cressida*. In later sections, he evaluates how each of these plays interacted with the major political issues confronting the realm—the exclusion and succession crises, religious and political positions as expressed in various tracts, the rise of the Essex faction, and overall attempts at political control.

Lake also attempts to distinguish his own approach from Historical Criticism.

He first identifies how history plays themselves developed and were viewed, both in theory and by the theatergoing public. He looks at their use in the 1580s via the Queen's Men, and identifies how the theories developed. He provides a background on how various political tracts (often referred to as “libels”) sought to influence royal politics, often including interpretations of historical examples. Lake then further defines his approach to comparing historical situations with the Shakespeare history plays as something less than propagandistic, combining both an educational and a developing public historical and political sense. He also evaluates how the various plays relate to each other.

Lake's general aim is to “treat the Shakespeare plays as evidence for how contemporaries thought about politics and/or history as ‘process.’” He defines “process” as: “interactions between individuals bent on realizing their particular aims and defending their interests in a variety of settings.” Specifically, he wants to “use the plays to see how contemporaries thought about . . . topics of succession, tyranny and resistance,

usurpation and war . . . [and] to watch Shakespeare think about monarchical legitimacy and, if lost, how to restore it.” Other topics Lake considers are: the emergent sense of politics using analyses of histories and the extent of censorship. He defines “politics” as the maneuvers of political agents or groups in contention for control of events.

The main Catholic writings he discusses are: *A Treatise of Treasons* (1572), *Leicester’s Commonwealth* (1584) and Parsons’s *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crowne of England* (1594). These tracts all view Elizabeth’s advisors as “evil counsels,” and each tract advocates that it offers the only solution to the Queen’s problems. The arguments are based less on religious differences than on depicting her counselors as Machiavellian, using references to history as arguments and comparisons (4). In particular, Parsons interprets various historical references to argue for an “elective monarchy” as the best safeguard against tyranny.

Protestant tracts are similarly organized and intended. Both groups used examples from ancient Roman and English histories to make their points, sometimes with the same example (like King John). The overriding message is that the Queen’s succession needs to be settled. Lake cites the early play *Gorboduc* as making this point rather directly.

Lake writes that his main objective is to “use Shakespeare’s plays to say something about the period, then use a picture of the period to discuss the plays and the theatre,” thus necessitating a contextual reading of particular plays (he does recognize a circularity in that approach). He also examines interactions between and among the plays and political texts, suggesting the “ideological and political trajectories of these plays” (13). He accepts that “politics is largely a monarchical and aristocratic affair,” hence the plays almost exclusively deal with kings, queens and courtiers. But he notes that politics also encompasses questions of gender, social and cosmic order. Lake sees the plays less as propaganda than as opening up issues for interpretation. As he puts it: “This is a history book that attempts to use the history play (broadly defined) as a way to think about the political thought and culture of the Elizabethan [era].”

Following current English historians’ thinking, he outlines the principal issues developing in the 1580s: first among them is the “exclusion crisis”—a permanent potential crisis caused by the Queen’s refusal to marry or name an heir throughout her reign. There is also religious polarization, especially involving international intrigue and the painful memories of Edward VI’s and Mary’s reversions. A fundamental split seems to be between Elizabeth herself and her counsels. Even William Cecil commissions political tracts to try to influence her, as well as attempts at Parliamentary intervention.

Lake discusses the Queen’s Men, formed by Walsingham and Leicester in 1583 under Elizabeth’s

patronage. He sees it as a political effort to broaden the Queen’s appeal, as a surrogate for her progresses, defending the Tudor legitimacy, and taking an orthodox Protestant stance. Lake doesn’t mention the impending Spanish invasion, but accepts the Bastard from the earlier *King John* as an English rallying cry. Playing both in London and in most counties, the troupe performed early versions of the history plays like *The True Tragedy of Richard III*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, and *Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth*. Performing around the same time, Lord Strange’s troupe had a more anti-Puritan bent.

Lake notes (25-26) the transition from the 1580s Queen’s Men to the dual Lord Chamberlain and Admiral’s Men of the 1590s, which “suggests a coherent plan emanating from the center of the regime.” This coincides with the transition from the “exclusion crisis” to the “succession crisis”; Shakespeare’s plays, Lake argues, were developed for this period.

Following Thomas Blundeville’s 1574 exposition, *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading of Hystories*, history plays are a form of political analysis, mainly concerned with war, peace and sedition. Blundeville identified “chief doers” and how they operate, either for good or evil. “Providence” or fortune is considered. These all seem to have been utilized in the Shakespeare history plays.

The plays “actualize,” in a compressed narrative form, historians’ approaches and theories. Part of their function is to educate a wider public (41). Here Lake brings in Philip Sidney via his *Defense of Poetry*, to show the tension between the “poetic” and “historical” approaches. There is overlap in “framing speeches,” i.e., Shakespeare poetically makes history contemporary by certain allusions (e.g., the anachronistic clock in *Julius Caesar*). This juxtaposition allows him to use dramatic situations both to serve as a form of historical analysis and to comment on present conditions. They also allow the audience a view of what “real” politics are like.

Lake believes that each “new” history play is related to its predecessors, i.e., that *Thomas of Woodstock* is needed to understand *Richard II*, the earlier *Troublesome Reign* to understand the later *King John*, and *Famous Victories* to understand the *Henry IV-Henry V* trilogy. Unfortunately, Lake didn’t consider Ramon Jiménez’s works on dating these plays. Lake has Shakespeare “reworking” six earlier history plays from the Queen’s Men.

Lake concludes that censorship during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods was “intermittent but effective,” resulting in “self-censorship” and “functional ambiguity.” This, of course, is a key argument for Shakespeare’s own ambiguity and possible multiple interpretations.

Lake treats the plays in the “order they were written . . . following scholarly consensus” and compares them to political events of the time and to other plays. What the

“scholarly consensus” is should be apparent. For example, Lake relies on Brian Vickers’s stylistic analyses to attribute *Titus Andronicus* as co-written by George Peele. Perhaps Lake’s stated feeling of inferiority regarding knowledge of literary criticism is the major reason for sticking with Stratfordian “wisdom.”

The main underlying currents of the 1590s are the succession crisis, Catholic and Puritan commentaries and the “Essex project.” Lake sees the latter as the gradual rise of supporters around Essex focused on the succession (favoring James VI of Scotland). Essex supporters ranged from more moderate Puritans to similarly minded Catholics. Initially, Francis Bacon was part of the group, many of whom were part of, or derived from, the circle around Leicester. Henry Wriothesley was very close to Essex. Essex was unalterably opposed to peace with Spain, and wanted to continue fighting against Hapsburg world domination. Regarding the commentaries mentioned above, Lake “doesn’t want to claim the Author must have read these tracts,” although he admits to that possibility.

How exactly do these plays, the contextual issues and the written political tracts interrelate? Lake sees them more as “confluences” than “influences.” They merely illustrate the range of concerns of the times in their own fashion. He suggests that Shakespeare is “tapping into the political unconscious” of the times (62). It is here that he tries to distinguish his historical approach from New or Old Historical Criticism.

Lake then ponders on how the history plays were initially received. He thinks people thought about them “as ways to think about the big issues—succession, legitimacy, war—which were legally and formally taboo subjects.” Lake admits that staging or publishing them involved “considerable risk,” but that “they were risks, I would argue, these plays took consistently, and just as consistently, got away with” (65).

Conclusion. This section is a concise summary of the intermediate chapters dealing with the individual history plays and their cultural and political interactions. Some very interesting points are made here.

Using the history plays, Lake demonstrates the Bard’s recognition that times can be “out of joint,” and that events and conditions sometimes allow for, or prevent, any effective rule. He addresses the question of perceived “legitimacy” of rule in the plays, demonstrating through them how it affects the rulers. Henry IV is never at ease regarding his usurpation of Richard II’s crown, while his son Henry V takes the throne under historical conditions assuring his own legitimacy.

Lake also analyzes individual rulers as to fitness for rule. Henry V is crafty when necessary, occasionally cruel but also generous. In effect, he is Shakespeare’s ideal king. Yet Julius Caesar, with many of the same qualities, is assassinated for his efforts, because the

conditions of the Late Roman Republic were confused and in transition, both for an impending dictatorship as well as for traditional republicans like Brutus. Henry VI, as a weak king, is one precipitating factor (along with too strong female influence) in the crises and war that ensue.

Turning to the relationships of plays to events and historical conditions after Shakespeare’s time, Lake sees the 1620s as a “crisis” period. Remarkably, however, he ignores the question of Prince Charles’s impending marriage to a Spanish princess in this time frame, precisely when the First Folio was published. There may be some selective history reading here.

Below are few selected quotes from Lake’s book, and some of my reactions:

1. The “genius” argument: “it is not necessary to attribute to Shakespeare positively preternatural knowledge of secret conversations taking place in faraway Ireland, but merely a conventionally Shakespearean capacity both imaginatively to inhabit and effectively stage situations and dilemmas of which he had no direct knowledge or experience” (502).

2. “The conventional view of the theatre’s involvement in such [political] matters holds that the producers of [history] plays were concerned solely . . . to make a profit. . . . These were not attempts to do politics.” Further: “Such account overlooks the origins of the history play in the repertoire of the Queen’s Men and the decidedly political origin of [the company] . . . to fulfill the propagandistic purposes of the regime.” “For Shakespeare to recast those [plays] was an inherently political act.” “[Some of the] earliest history plays by Shakespeare . . . were . . . arguably written for Lord Strange’s Men” (580ff). This section mentions the potential for war with Spain, but Lake’s dates seem too late: mainly post-1588.

3. “Shakespeare was an extraordinarily acute observer of the necessity and fragility of the modes of representation and assertion required to sustain legitimacy in post-Reformation England” (598). This seems rather abstract for a man on the street.

4. “Shakespeare got the Essex affair spectacularly wrong.” But then: “As an aspiring poet and dramatist, Shakespeare was on the edge of the court and in the midst of the court-centered news networks and gossip circles of London. As someone with some sort of patron-client relationship with Essex’s intimate, the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare had an entree of sorts into circles around the Earl. Indeed it appears that Shakespeare was and remained decidedly connected in Essexian circles.” Finally: “Shakespeare, then, had form as an Essex man” (603ff). Part of Lake’s argument in this regard is that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was a mocking apologia about the Oldcastle/Falstaff mixup on behalf of Essex versus his enemy, Lord Cobham (a descendant of Oldcastle). Yet Shakespeare got away with it all.

Analysis

There are a number of seriously weak historical positions in Professor Lake's effort. As mentioned, he failed to consider the significance of an impending Spanish invasion prior to 1588 as a determining factor in setting up the Queen's Men (as well as improving the British navy). To the English government in the years 1583-1588, war and/or invasion seemed inevitable following Mary Queen of Scots's execution, English participation in the Spanish Netherlands, Drake's raids, and Spain's acquisition of the Portuguese fleet. This would have allowed for earlier history play productions as discussed above. Also, as mentioned, Lake failed to consider the Spanish Marriage Crisis of 1619-1623 in terms of using and republishing Shakespeare's history and other plays.

Lake recognizes that Shakespeare "got away" with his political history plays, freely discussing issues that Lake admits were "legally and formally taboo." Indeed, "got away" may be an understatement. To speak or write publicly about the question of Elizabeth's succession was treason. Shakespeare, as far as we know, was never censored, never had his works suppressed or burned, and was never called in for questioning by the authorities. It is impossible to understand how a commoner playwright could "get away" with writing such material not once, but repeatedly. Surely a conscientious historian must see that some serious questions need to be asked, and that some explanation is in order. Lake doesn't.

Lake disavows Queen Elizabeth's reported comments on the staging of *Richard II* during the Essex debacle. Yet the trial itself involved managers and actors in this play, but not the play's author. In at least two instances Lake asserts that the Bard was a client of the Earl of Southampton. Sadly, Lake doesn't consider the work of Charlotte Stopes and others who failed to find any relationship between Shakespeare and Southampton or other aristocrat or member of the Court. But if Shakespeare had been "an Essex man," it is too much to believe he could have gotten away not only scot-free, but without even being mentioned. The most logical reason is that he was protected by the highest levels of the Court and government. A related question not considered by Lake is why Southampton was also protected to a degree; as one of the principals in the rebellion, he should have also faced the execution block. He too was protected, but by whom?

Almost all of Lake's analysis is dependent on his assumption of when the plays were released for public viewing and/or published. Accepting "scholarly consensus" as to when these plays were first written requires conforming to the Stratfordian timetable of this fully articulate "genius," meaning nothing could have been written before the very late 1580s. But there is much evidence to suggest that these plays, or early versions of them, were written much earlier. They were

likely first performed for court or aristocratic audiences well in advance of turning them over to commercial theatre productions. It could be that "Shakespeare" was never directly involved with the Essex faction. They themselves might have been the agents determining when to release plays like *Richard II*, *Richard III* and *Henry V* to the wider public.

So who is this Author "Shakespeare"? Is he the uneducated William of Stratford, the genius who is "tapping into the political unconscious" of the times (62), who can "both imaginatively . . . inhabit and effectively stage situations and dilemmas of which he had not direct knowledge or experience" (502)? Never mind that this Author carefully nuanced his history plays to consider the role of ruler and existing conditions, continually framing those critical succession crises in different historical situations. Lake admits that Shakespeare didn't likely write the history plays "to make a profit," but was "engaging in a political act." Doesn't Professor Lake wish to admit that, at least for most human beings, careful and lengthy studies of history (along with familiarity with the stage and its productions), would be a *sine qua non* for such activity?

From my perspective, basing this book on the Stratfordian Shakespeare assumption is so weak and untenable that it vitiates what could be valuable historical comparisons. One mark of a conscientious historian is being willing to consider viable alternatives when a particular assumption is weak or unsupportable. My first suggestion would be for Professor Lake to familiarize himself with Diana Price's *Shakespeare's Unorthodox Biography*, which merely concludes that, based on the pathetic historical literary track record for Will of Stratford (examined in scrupulous detail), someone else (likely aristocratic) is the Author.

Oxfordians, of course, can suggest an extremely viable and specific option: Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. If seriously considered as a hidden Poet/Author under a pseudonym, he could drive a final stake into the heart of Foucaultian nonsense. De Vere's presence is felt almost as a ghost in virtually every corner of Elizabethan era politics and times. All of Lake's principal actors—Queen Elizabeth, King James I, William and Robert Cecil, Leicester, Sussex, Sidney, Essex, Southampton, Sir Thomas Smith, Walsingham, Raleigh, Rutland, Gabriel Harvey, Thomas Nashe, and Baldassare Castiglione, among others—have definable and documented relationships with Edward de Vere. He was an aristocratic "insider" in the Court of Elizabeth, and remained in her good graces until her death. He was a student of good government—witness that he had borrowed Harvey's copy of Sir Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*. In the context of the earlier "Elizabethan exclusion crisis," he had sided with Sussex against Leicester as a peer of the realm. He was recognized as extremely interested in ancient history.

And most telling, he was acknowledged as among the best of poets and playwrights, sponsored and managed theatrical companies, and put on plays and interludes for the Court.

Lake never considered *Shake-speares Sonnets* in his evaluations. Yet there is general consensus that they were written in basically the same time frame of the 1590s as the history plays. The sonnets are intensely personal, and strongly tie de Vere with the Earl of Southampton. As the accepted hidden Poet/Playwright of the Court generating those historical plays well before the Essex debacle, he would not have been called on the carpet. Moreover, there is reason to believe he may have interceded on Southampton's behalf.

It would be interesting to ask both of the authors reviewed here—Professors Greenblatt and Lake—what difference would occur in their books if a hidden playwright were substituted for William of Stratford. My guess is that very little would change substantively. But connecting a real-world human “Shakespeare” to his own extensive knowledge and experience could make for a much more plausible read.

Despite these shortcomings, I recommend Greenblatt's book and a perusal of at least the initial and final sections of Lake's book. Literary scholars might find the middle sections dealing with individual plays and interpretations of interest from an historical perspective.

Esther Singleton, *Shakespearian Fantasias: Adventures in the Fourth Dimension* (originally published 1929; modern edition introduced and annotated by James Warren, Veritas Publications, 2019)

Reviewed by Mike Hyde

Once more James Warren has brought Esther Singleton to our view (see also “Esther Singleton—Worth Remembering,” *Newsletter*, Winter 2015 issue). *Shakespearian Fantasias* is her one great work for Oxfordians today, and Warren has succeeded in his new edition, compelling us to revisit her book, subtitled “Adventures in the Fourth Dimension,” first published in 1929, a few months before her death in 1930.

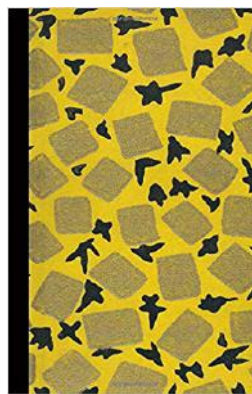
I suggest that Oxfordians who are more interested in the “How I Became An Oxfordian” conversion theme start first with Warren's detailed and helpful introduction and the four appendices, which include Singleton's own Oxford testament (not published until 1940). The appendices contain valuable insights from friends such as Col. Bernard R. Ward and Eva Turner Clark. These are the external evidence of Singleton's importance as an early Looney reader and convert.

Oxfordians who are drawn to internal evidence might do best to begin with her eleven fourth-dimension fantasies purporting to record the interactions of an intelligent young woman of the Twentieth Century who travels back to the Sixteenth Century. There she meets various Shakespearean characters, who escort and guide her through manors and palaces, parks and meads, in Windsor and Illyria and Messina, somehow always “Under the Greenwood Tree”—the title of her fourth fantasy.

I will follow my first suggestion. Warren's introduction describes Singleton's incredible memory of

Shakespeare works, which she had “read and reread since childhood.” This is on display in her 1922 book, *The Shakespeare Garden*, a work in which she is still manifestly a Stratfordian Bardolater. But that changed suddenly after she read Looney's 1920 *Shakespeare Identified* not once, but three times cover to cover within the space of a few days. In February 2017 Singleton's 1940 statement (posthumously published) of lost faith in Will Shakspeare and new belief in Edward de Vere appeared in the SOF's online “How I Became an Oxfordian” series. It says there that she read Looney in 1921 and immediately wrote her statement, but her friend Eva Turner Clark recalled (appendix 3) that in 1924, “About two years after *The Shakespeare Garden* was published, Miss Singleton said to me abruptly one day, ‘I don't know whether Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare!’” She had just read Looney, who had “shaken [her] faith in the Stratford Man.” So 1924 seems to be the better date of her conversion.

Mostly we hear about early readers of Looney such as Sigmund Freud, Charlie Chaplin, and Orson Welles. But this overlooks the more trailblazing work done by those early converts who faced much more rejection and hostility, such as Esther Singleton, Col. Bernard R. Ward, and Eva Turner Clark (who, as a result of her conversation with Singleton, obtained Looney's book and became an Oxfordian). Warren quotes fully, and rightly emphasizes, this crucial sentence from Singleton's 1940 statement: “You who read this, I beg you not to condemn me and the theory but to read further on.” She recalls that her initial thrice-times reading of Looney was accomplished despite her own “prejudice and deep contempt and antagonism.” Her childhood beliefs died hard. But she was evidently so persuasive to 1929 readers that Henry Folger bought twenty copies of *Shakespearian Fantasias*



and sent them to friends, as Freud did on a smaller scale with Looney's opus. The original manuscript of Singleton's book is in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

In *Shakesperian Fantasias*, Singleton transformed her strong emotional ties to Shakespeare's works into first-person Alice in Wonderland fantasies of meeting Shakespeare characters in the fourth dimension of the plays themselves and their settings. In the first fantasy, "Datchet Mead," her female time-traveling narrator immediately asks sweet Ann Page, "Which of Shakespeare's plays do you belong to?" Singleton's sense of the plays as autobiography and of the characters as real persons living in the sixteenth century propels her to advance the case for de Vere in most of the fantasies as a direct personal experience based on the internal evidence of Shakespeare's works, especially the abundant lyrics and sonnets woven into the text throughout the plays.

James Warren tells us in advance that he has annotated these Oxford/Shakespeare moments in footnotes rather than endnotes—a wise editorial choice that illuminates Singleton's overt and covert allusions to de Vere. I count a baker's dozen of these footnote references to de Vere's poems, travels, and life events.

Curiously, Singleton herself stated in a letter to Col. Ward (p. 259): "In two of the stories I have put in a de Vere touch, which is my way of acknowledging our glorious Edward de Vere." Perhaps Singleton was unaware of (or, as Warren says, was "coy" about) the many unmistakable references to de Vere in her text. From an authorship standpoint this creates a spinning 4-D circle of attributions via Shakespeare characters to de Vere's life and poems. As the wheel spins, Benedick and Berowne and Jaques are clearly identifiable to Oxfordians as de Vere personae whether they are quoting Shakespeare or quoting Oxford. Yes, quoting Oxford's poems side by side with Shakespeare!

The pages of the seventh fantasy, "The Merry Mad Cap Lord," feature Berowne/Shakespeare/Vere in four successive Oxford footnotes, thanks to Warren. First, Berowne is described just as George Chapman described the Earl of Oxford in *Bussy d'Ambois* (1610)—the "most goodly fashioned man I ever saw." Next Berowne himself speaks of John Lyly as "my fellow worker" and identifies himself in his role as Philautus in the *Euphues* novels. The de Vere motto in Latin, *Vero Nihil Verius*, is then quoted and read aloud by Berowne from Lyly's dedication to Oxford in *Euphues and His England* (1580). Last is Berowne's English version of the Vere motto, "truer than truth itself," from Armado's letter to Jaquenetta! The Mad Cap fantasy ends with Berowne reciting ten lines from de Vere's prefatory poem "Labor and Its Rewards" printed in Bedingfield's translation of *Cardanus Comforte* in 1573.

This whirl of internal self-reference by Shakespeare characters to de Vere himself is the most autobiographical use of literary evidence for de Vere as

Shakespeare that Singleton adds as a "touch" for all readers. Remember this is 1929; so what is the source of all of these Vere-as-Shakespeare references treated by Singleton as real, intimate, and undeniable?

In her own whirl of reading Looney three times in a few days, Singleton appears to have been struck by Looney lightning. A quick look back at Looney's chapters on de Vere as a lyric poet reveal at once that she took these nearly as much to heart as she did in her girlhood reading and memorizing much of Shakespeare. She extracts Looney's solution in his search for the *ababcc* sestet rhyme scheme of *Venus and Adonis* from his fifth chapter, as Jaques recites in its entirety de Vere's poem, whose first line is "If women could be fair and not yet fond." Warren provides a helpful footnote that this poem is attributed to "The Earle of Oxenforde" in the Rawlinson Manuscript, later set to music by William Byrd in 1587. But the actual source for Singleton was clearly Looney, who found de Vere's poem in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*.

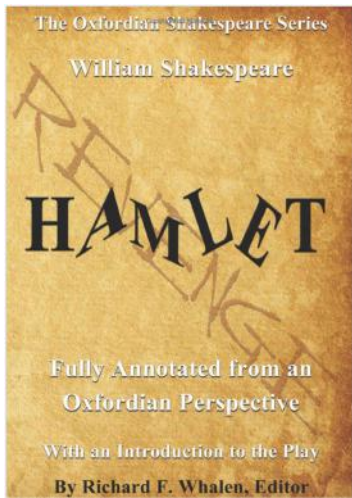
Looney's chapters seven and eight on de Vere as a lyric poet are swallowed whole by Singleton; it was thus as a writer of lyrics that de Vere appealed most to her—not Looney's inductive reasoning or his two checklists in chapters three and four pointing to a courtier author of Shakespeare. Nor, I think, did Singleton need to count up Looney's lengthier list of coincidences in de Vere's life and poetry to be convinced of de Vere as Shakespeare. Her ear heard the same music in the lyric poetry of de Vere and the more famous lyrics of Shakespeare.

The "haggards wild" that fly from "man to man" in the poem on women are cited by Looney in his eighth chapter with this conclusion: "Indeed if we made a patchwork of all the passages in Shakespeare in which the word 'haggard' occurs we can virtually reconstruct De Vere's single poem on 'Women.'" Singleton totally adopts this lyric theory of de Vere as Shakespeare in her portrayal of Oxford as Berowne and vice versa, taken from Looney's eleventh chapter. Her phrase for John Lyly as "my fellow worker" with Berowne comes straight from the fifth section of the same Looney chapter titled "Oxford the Real Innovator" and agrees with Looney's claim that Oxford is the author of the lyrics in Lyly's plays.

While I am chiefly a proponent of external evidence for authorship attribution, I have admiration and respect for Singleton's fine ear for music and melody and for her espousal of the lyric theory of de Vere as the Shakespeare author. Rather than citing further examples from her book, I close by praising her reading both Shakespeare (and Looney) "again and again," just as we are advised in the Preface to the First Folio.



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A Sample Oxford/Shakespeare Parallel

From his new book (see page 1), Roger Stritmatter selects the following as a vivid illustration of what emerges when one compares a line from Oxford’s poetry to the continuum of variations in Shakespeare. In line 33 of Poem XII, Oxford writes, “Time shall frame a time unto my will.” Consider the progression of Shakespearean intertextuality: “When *time shall serve*, to show in articles” (2 *Hen. IV* 4.1.74); “*Time shall unfold* what plighted cunning hides” (*Lear* 1.1.280); “When *time shall serve*, let but the herald cry,/ And I’ll appear again” (*Lear* 5.1.48); “I say little; but when/ *time shall serve*, there shall be smiles” (*Hen. V* 2.1.6); “And therefore *frame the law unto my will*” (1 *Hen. VI* 2.4.9); “And therefore *frame* your manners *to the time*” (*Shrew* 1.1.227).

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