

**SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY**  
**NEWSLETTERS**

**1980**



110 Glen Argyle Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21212

## "A HUNDRETH SUNDRIE FLOWRES" REVISITED

In our preceding issue we promised our readers, or threatened them with, an exegesis of the first anthology of Elizabethan verse, a compendium embracing a long prose narrative interspersed with poems by "F. I.," poems by unnamed "sundry gentlemen" and assorted verse attributed to George Gascoigne. "A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres" was published in 1573 to "the scandalizing of some worthy persons," superceded three years later by another, radically bowdlerized edition in which the entire contents were attributed to Gascoigne, this being within months pounced upon by the authorities and removed from the market. Obviously readers are faced by it with a complicated bit of Elizabethan literary history. Indeed, it is so complicated that we are not, after all, going to explore it here -- at least for the present. We made "Flowres" our main preoccupation for weeks, beset by its mysteries and contradictions (and a knowledge of how late the newsletter was going to be), struggling to organize the facts and our deductions into a comprehensible account, then sent what we had written -- only the first of what would be two long instalments, it developed -- to those who share responsibility for the newsletter. They were stunned into silence (while further weeks slipped by) and in the end were unable to accept certain conclusions we had arrived at. So we have scrapped the article.

We hope to get back to "Flowres." Containing the first original novel in English and poetry which might tell us much of extreme interest to our Society if we can satisfy ourselves as to its authorship, it is clearly a publication of great importance. It is available today in two editions. One, with the prose parts cut to the bone, was brought out in 1926 by Bernard M. Ward, limited to 400 copies. This was reprinted with much valuable additional material by Ruth Loyd Miller in 1975 (Kernikat Press, Port Jefferson, N. Y.). The other edition, by Professor Charles Tyler Prouty, was published by the University of Missouri Press in 1942 and reprinted in 1970. Both editions contain introductions offering the editor's theory of the origins of "Flowres." The two theories are at wide variance with each other and, in our view, with what may be inferred with some confidence from a reading of "Flowres" and of the version of three years later, entitled "The Posies of George Gascoigne, Esq." How Professor Prouty and other scholars can have read the two and yet take seriously the claim that Gascoigne was the author of "Flowres" in its entirety and that, of the two, "The Posies" is the bona fide, authentic version is beyond our understanding. But then the reading-characteristics of orthodox Elizabethan scholarship often are.

We hope to return to "Flowres (and "The Posies") in the newsletter, if only to marshal the salient facts and to define and narrow the problems they present--and to hope that our readers will tackle them. At the moment, however, the mere thought of assaulting once more, from scratch, the puzzle of the book we have come to think of as A Hundred Sundry Thickets sends us into shock.

"THE MISSING LINK"

In recent rereadings of Shakespeare and Oxford we were much struck by the similarity between "Verses Made by the Earl of Oxford"--the "Echo" verses--and Shakespeare's "A Lovers's Complaint." Compare the first two stanzas of each:

Oxford:

Sitting alone upon my thought in  
melancholy mood,  
In sight of sea, and at my back an  
ancient hoary wood,  
I saw a fair young lady come, her  
secret fears to wail,  
Clad all in colour of a nun, and  
covered with a veil;  
Yet (for the day was calm and clear)  
I might discern her face,  
As one might see a damask rose hid  
under crystal glass.  
Three times, with her soft hand,  
full hard on her left side she  
knocks,  
And sigh'd so sore as might have  
mov'd some pity in the rocks;  
From sighs and shedding amber tears  
into sweet song she brake,  
When thus the echo answered her to  
every word she spake: . . .

Shakespeare:

From off a hill whose concave  
womb reworded  
A plaintful story from a sistr'ing  
vale,  
My spirits t'attend this double voice  
accorded,  
And down I laid to list the sad-tun'd  
tale:  
Ere long espied a fickle maid full  
pale,  
Tearing of papers, breaking rings  
atwain,  
Storming her world with sorrow's  
wind and rain.  
Upon her head a platted hive  
of straw,  
Which fortified her visage from  
the sun  
Whereon the thought might think  
sometime it saw

The carcass of a beauty spent and done.  
Time had not scythed all that youth  
begun,  
Nor youth all quit; but, spite of  
heaven's fell rage,  
Some beauty peep'd through lattice  
of sear'd age.

The two poems read to me like two  
versions of the same one.

Oxford's poem is in iambic heptameter--the verse form of "Romeus and Juliet" and of the so-called Golding translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (see Newsletter for Fall 1979) and of alternating lines (alternating with hexameters) of no fewer than thirteen poems in--and we vow we shall not mention it again--"Flowres," assigned to various of the "sundry gentlemen." Otherwise it seemed to me doubtful that the reader could be sure which was Oxford's, which Shakespeare's.

Later I found that Ruth Loyd Miller had made the same point in her edition of--well--"A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres." Commenting on "Verses Made by the Earl of Oxford," she wrote: "Compare Oxford's first verse with these [the first three] stanzas from Shakespeare's 'A Lover's Complaint.' Have we not in the Shakespeare stanzas the same thought (and the same lady) but only more mature and much perfected?"

At this same time there arrived from Harold W. Patience, the secretary of the English branch of our Society, a contribution to the newsletter under a title I have borrowed for this item. Mr. Patience observes that "the long, sophisticated and voluptuous poem 'Venus and Adonis,'" published in 1593 as "the first heir of my invention," must have been preceded by other verse, even excluding dramatic work, for in that year 'William of Stratford was twenty-nine years old, the same age as Marlowe. The latter had by then produced 'Hero and Leander' and several immortal plays. He was killed in a pub at Deptford in this very year." Mr. Patience resumes:

"There are strong indications that in the early acknowledged poems of de Vere (and others signed with various pseudonyms)

we have Shakespeare's early verse. What we need to establish is the missing link between these poems and 'Venus and Adonis.' This link I believe to be 'A Lover's Complaint.' In 'A Life of William Shakespeare' (1923) Joseph Quincy Adams [later Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library] writes:

"The Sonnets ended with the usual 'Finis': but to the collection Thorpe appended another work, a poem of 329 lines entitled 'A Lover's Complaint,' which he stated to be also 'by William Shakespeare.'"

"... our chief difficulty in rejecting Thorpe's ascription lies in the fact that it is hard to discover anyone besides Shakespeare to whom we may assign the poem, which despite its many absurd faults has at times a beauty that reflects the art of the great master."

"(No doubt Professor Adams had in mind there the sublime lines:

O father, what a hell of witchcraft  
lies in the small orb of one particular tear.)

"Professor Adams continues:

"It is safe only to conclude that Thorpe's attribution carries little authority, and that the poem may have been an inferior (it seems to be an incomplete) product of Shakespeare's pen, or an unusually excellent imitation of Shakespeare's popular style, in which the unknown author occasionally, as Professor Mackail observes, 'writes like Shakespeare at his best'..."

Professor Adams was surely nearer the mark than he could have imagined: the poem is an inferior -- because early -- product of "Shakespeare's" pen in which the unknown author -- Oxford -- occasionally writes like "Shakespeare" at his best.

Mr. Patience goes on:

"There are several striking points of resemblance between Oxford's 'Echo' verses and 'The Complaint.' The same young lady seems to dominate both poems, the slight exception being that in Oxford's she is 'covered with a veil' and in Shakespeare's wears 'a platted hive of straw.'" He could have added, of course, that in both poems the poet is an eavesdropper in melancholy spirit in a lonely countryside overhearing the sad recital of a solitary maiden distracted by sorrow. He notes the following parallels:

#### Lord Oxford

the echo answered her  
shedding amber tears  
in color of a nun  
can from bondage it  
deliver  
under crystal glass  
damask rose  
covered with a veil

#### Shakespeare

a hill whose concave  
womb reworded  
heave a napkin to her eyn  
to charm a sacred nun  
true to bondage  
glaz'd with crystal gate  
glowing roses  
and veil's in them

Mr. Patience concurs in John Masefield's verdict that "A Lover's Complaint" is a work of Shakespeare's youth: "fresh and felicitous as youth's work often is." Shakespeare's youth was, however, spent in Stratford, he points out, and we doubt if any scholar would have the temerity to suggest that the poem was the product of Shakespeare's late teens or early twenties or of the Stratford milieu, or that he would at any time have had the audacity to plagiarize a poem of Oxford's. Nor can we imagine any scholar arguing that Oxford wrote the "Echo" verses in middle age, plagiarizing a poem of Shakespeare's that was not published until he had been dead five years. If both Oxford and Shakespeare were plagiarizing an earlier poem, the earlier poem has not been found and

the coincidence of their doing so is not credible, as certainly the coincidence of their just happening to write such similar poems is not. That would seem to leave but one explanation, that, as Mr. Patience concludes, "the 'Complaint' is merely an expanded version of the 'Echo' verses and that the Earl of Oxford wrote both."

.....

From Mr. Patience also comes the information that on February 24th he gave an hour's talk on Oxford to thirty members of the Essex Poetry and Prose Society in a large house on the edge of the village of Castle Hedingham. Colonel Ian Keelum, Vice President of our Society, who had driven Mr. Patience to the site of this talk, discovered that the secretary to Dr. Levi Fox, Director of the Shakespeare (sic) Birthplace Trust of Stratford was, most suprisingly, in the audience. So also was the personable receptionist at Castle Hedingham itself, Moira Moles. We have still to hear what she thought of the evidence presented by the speaker. We do not despair that Mrs. Moles's excellent good sense will yet bring her around to our view of the career and achievements of the 17th Earl of Oxford.

.....

#### FAMOUS PORTRAIT COMES TO THE UNITED STATES

The most startling development touching Lord Oxford in the past year came in connection with the well-known portrait bearing across its top the legend Edwd De Vere 17th E<sup>1</sup> of Oxford, attributed to Marcus Gheeraedts. Having been put up for auction at Christie's by its then owner, the 13th Duke of St. Albans, the handsome painting with the figure of the boar of the de Veres hung by a cord around its subject's neck, was aquired by the Minos D. Miller, Sr., Trust of Louisiana jointly with David J. Hanson, President of Phoenix West, Gas and Oil Corporation, of Ventura, California.

Before the portrait was brought from London, Ruth Miller writes, "we had it thoroughly cleaned and restored, with the wood panels taken apart and completely re-glued -- repairs to the panels had been poorly and improperly done through the years. The work was done by Mr. Brown of London, who undertakes this work also for Christie's. An x-ray was made of it before the repairs and restoration, and fine transparencies made both before and after. The panel work is a work of art in itself.

"The Hansons and the Miller Trust are creating some sort of legal entity for holding ownership, and eventually will be in a position to furnish reproductions to interested persons.....But that is still somewhat in the future at this time. Meanwhile we are doing out best to care for the portrait."

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#### Membership Dues (Tax deductible)

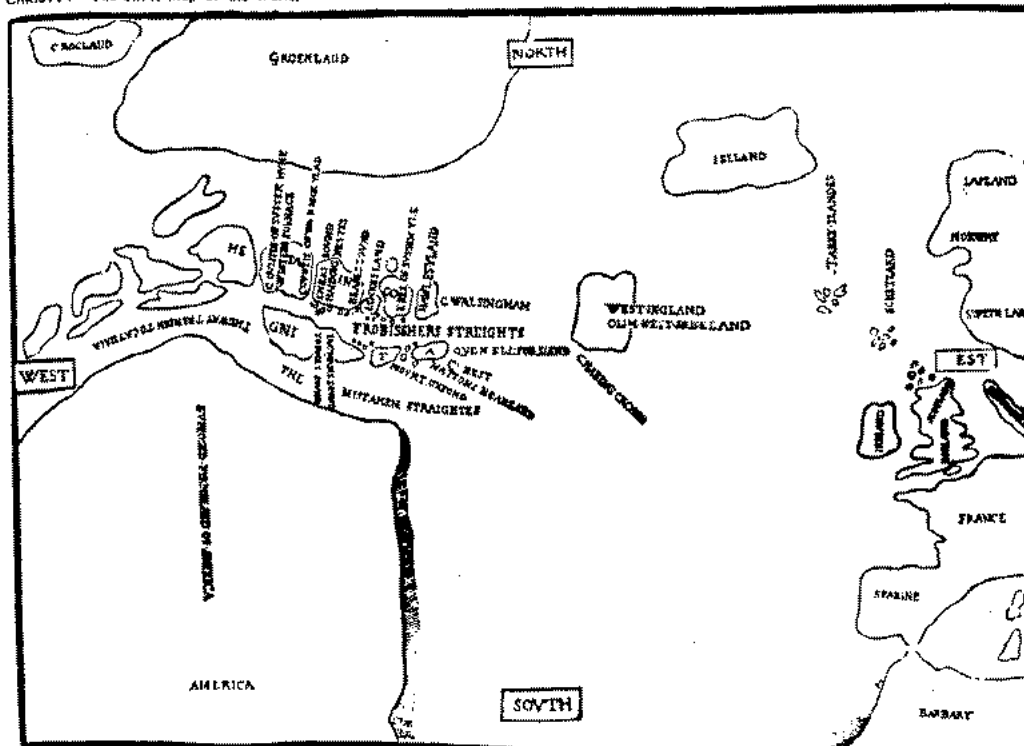
STUDENT MEMBER/ \$2.00 per annum  
REGULAR MEMBER/ \$10.00 per annum  
DONATING MEMBER/\$25.00 per annum  
or more

Shakespeare Oxford Society  
110 Glen Argyle Road  
Baltimore, Maryland

# LOCATING MOUNT OXFORD

CHRISTY: "The Silver Map of the World,"

PLATE VI.



BEST'S MAP OF FROBISHER'S DISCOVERIES IN 1576-78.

Showing "Mount Oxford"

Straights, mountains, harbors, sounds, islands and other landmarks were given names of investors in the expeditions. The Map of *Meta Incognita* shows Mount Oxford, along with Harrisons Headland, Countess of Sussex Myne, Countess of Warwick Island, and Lockes Land. At least, Lord Oxford, the heaviest investor, and heaviest loser, of the last voyage in 1578, had something to show for his investment, if nothing but a big pile of barren rocks bearing his name (Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations*).

Those who have examined the above map and legend on page 447 of Volume One of Ruth Loyd Miller's edition of J. Thomas Looney's "'Shakespeare' Identified" (we seem to have Mrs. Miller in every item of the present issue) must have wondered, as we have, if "Mount Oxford" could be identified with an actual mountain. Anyone comparing Best's map (the one shown above) with a contemporary map would necessarily conclude that the prospects were practically nil. Not only is the scale of the 16th Century map widely distorted (fifty miles of "Frobisschers Straights" being equal to 1500 of Europe) but the cluster of islands among which "Mount Oxford" rises bears virtually no visible relationship to the terrain features shown on a

contemporary map, as the reader will perceive if he compares Best's map with the second of the two following. Nevertheless, we thought it would be of interest to see how far the quest could be pursued.

Our first step was to ascertain from the Canadian Embassy in Washington what agency of the Canadian Government would have the most complete geographical knowledge of Baffin Island. Our letter of inquiry to the agency suggested by the Embassy was referred to Energy, Mines and Resources Canada in Ottawa, from which we received a reply dated 2 January 1980 and signed by Helen Kerfoot explaining the difficulty of "interpretation of Frobisher's maps in conjunction with current topographic maps." The writer promised to investigate the

question as soon as manpower was available.

Ms. Kerfoot proved to be as good as her word, indeed much more generous of her time than we had any right to expect, and to be an able geographical detective. We reproduce in full the letter we have received from her making her report. The "attached references" are texts that she very kindly had xeroxed for us. They are too lengthy for further reproduction here, and, moreover, we are not sure how the copyright laws would apply. They are, however:

"The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher." Vilhjalmur Stefansson. The Argonaut Press. London. 1938 p 64 and Map of Frobisher Bay shown below.

"The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher. Reprinted from the First Edition of Hakluyt's Voyages." Rear-Admiral

Richard Collinson. Burt Franklin, New York. Date not given pp 258-9 and Best's map.

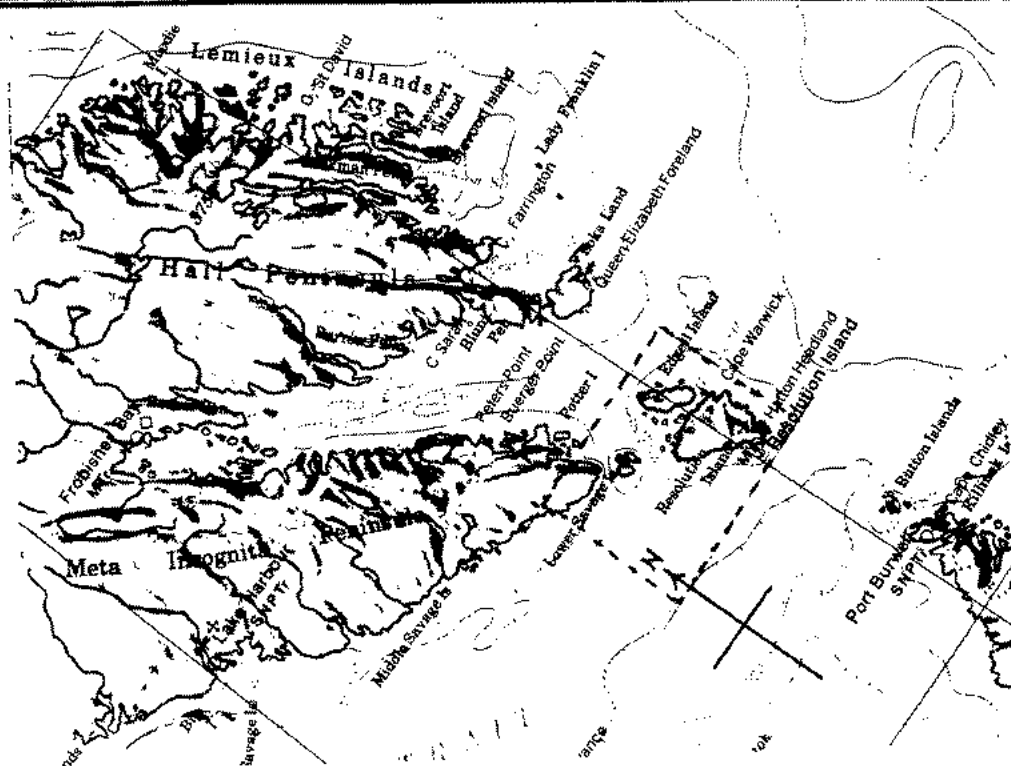
"Tokens of Possession. The Northern Voyages of Martin Frobisher." W. A. Kenyon. Royal Ontario Museum. Toronto. 1975 pp 95-9.

Ms. Kerfoot also enclosed several maps. These are shown on page 7. The first, from reference number one above, explains itself. The second, identified by Ms. Kerfoot as "Part of MCR 36. 1:4,000,000" is modern. Both show the extreme southeastern end of Baffin Island enclosing Frobisher Bay, and the second shows at right, the northern tip of Newfoundland. The area of the rectangle outlined in dashed lines on the latter is shown in large scale in a map following Ms. Kerfoot's letter.

On the map following Ms. Kerfoot's letter we have designated with black arrows the eminences that we judge from Helen Kerfoot's letter to be most likely candidates for the title of Mount Oxford. If through any further inquiries we are able to narrow the field we shall let our readers know. Meanwhile we may be entertained to see Oxford on the wild shores of Baffin Island in the company of those with whom he was associated in London: Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, Sir Christopher Hatton, Edward Dyer, Captain Geoffrey Fenton

and others. And we may trust that the Canadians in time will share our amusement that in Lok's Land the prototype of Shylock is commemorated.

Are we giving too much attention to a geographical question that must seem highly esoteric? We have in mind a time in the not distant future when a Royal Commission will be created to look into it and to decide which of the several most likely choices deserves the appellation of "Mount Oxford" for the greater glory of Canada and of the Northwest Territories. When the time comes we shall enjoy being able to say, in the jargon of advertising, "Remember you read it first in the Shakespeare-Oxford Society Newsletter."







Energy, Mines and  
Resources Canada

Énergie, Mines et  
Ressources Canada

Secretariat  
Geographical Names

Secrétariat  
Noms géographiques

March 5, 1980

Your file    Votre référence

Our file    Notre référence    25 J

Mr. C. Ogburn,  
10710 Vale Road,  
Oakton, Va. 22124.  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Ogburn:

Re: "Mount Oxford"

We have now checked out our own files and certainly have no "Mount Oxford", nor any variant of this name, in our current records. Since the Geographic Board of Canada (now the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names) was founded in 1897 it appears that "Mount Oxford" has at no time been entered in our official geographic nomenclature.

I have spent some hours perusing literature pertaining to the three voyages of Martin Frobisher (see attached references) and find "Mount Oxford" (or similar forms) only mentioned in connection with his third (1578) voyage in search of a northern passage to the Orient. The name would certainly seem to be linked with the Earl of Oxford, one of the "venturers", or financial backers, of this voyage, which was planned more to capitalize on mineral wealth, from incorrectly identified gold ore, than to seriously find a route to Cathay.

Reports by various seamen recount the initial progress up the "Mistaken Straights" (i.e. Hudson Strait) and the subsequent change of course of the vessels in July, 1578 to enter "Frobishers Straights" (Frobisher Bay) to search out the mines found on the northern shores during the voyage of the previous year. I am attaching extracts from various accounts, which as you will see do not give the type of detail on distances, necessary to try to identify "Mount Oxford" on present-day maps. It would appear that Best's map and the descriptions do agree that

...

580 Booth Street  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0E4

580, rue Booth  
Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0E4

- 2 -

"Mount Oxford" was on the southern shore of "Frobishers Streights". Ice conditions delayed several of the vessels crossing north to the "Countesse of Warwicks Sounde", where "gold" was to be mined on what is now Kodlunarn Island.

I am enclosing a photocopy of parts of the NTS sheets 25 NW/NE and 25 SE (1:500,000) so that perhaps you may draw your own conclusions. I found when first drafting this letter to you I was slipping rapidly into the realm of speculation, so will limit myself to a few comments.

(a) On Best's map "Mount Oxford" is plotted approximately midway between "Yorkes Sound" (now York Sound)/"Iacmans Sound" (now Jackman Sound) and the far eastern point of land.

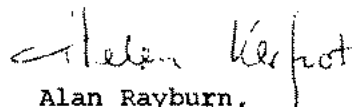
(b) The portrayal of the Lower Savage Islands on today's maps shows a significant land area. On the older maps this group of islands (whose name is derived from William Baffin's voyage) is not readily identifiable. The question, of course, arises as to which side of these islands Frobisher's ships navigated.

(c) It would seem clear that "Mount Oxford" must have been visible from the southern shore of "Frobishers Streights", and be located fairly near the coast.

(d) An interpretation of 16th century names by G. Heath (attached) shows "Mount Oxford" located to the east of the route taken from "Mistaken Straights". From today's configuration this location might be on Edgell Island.

If you are able in any way to determine whether "Mount Oxford" corresponds with Sugarloaf Hill, the point recorded as 1010', the high point on the Lower Savage Islands or a summit on Edgell Island or Resolution Island, I should be very glad to hear of your results!

Sincerely yours,

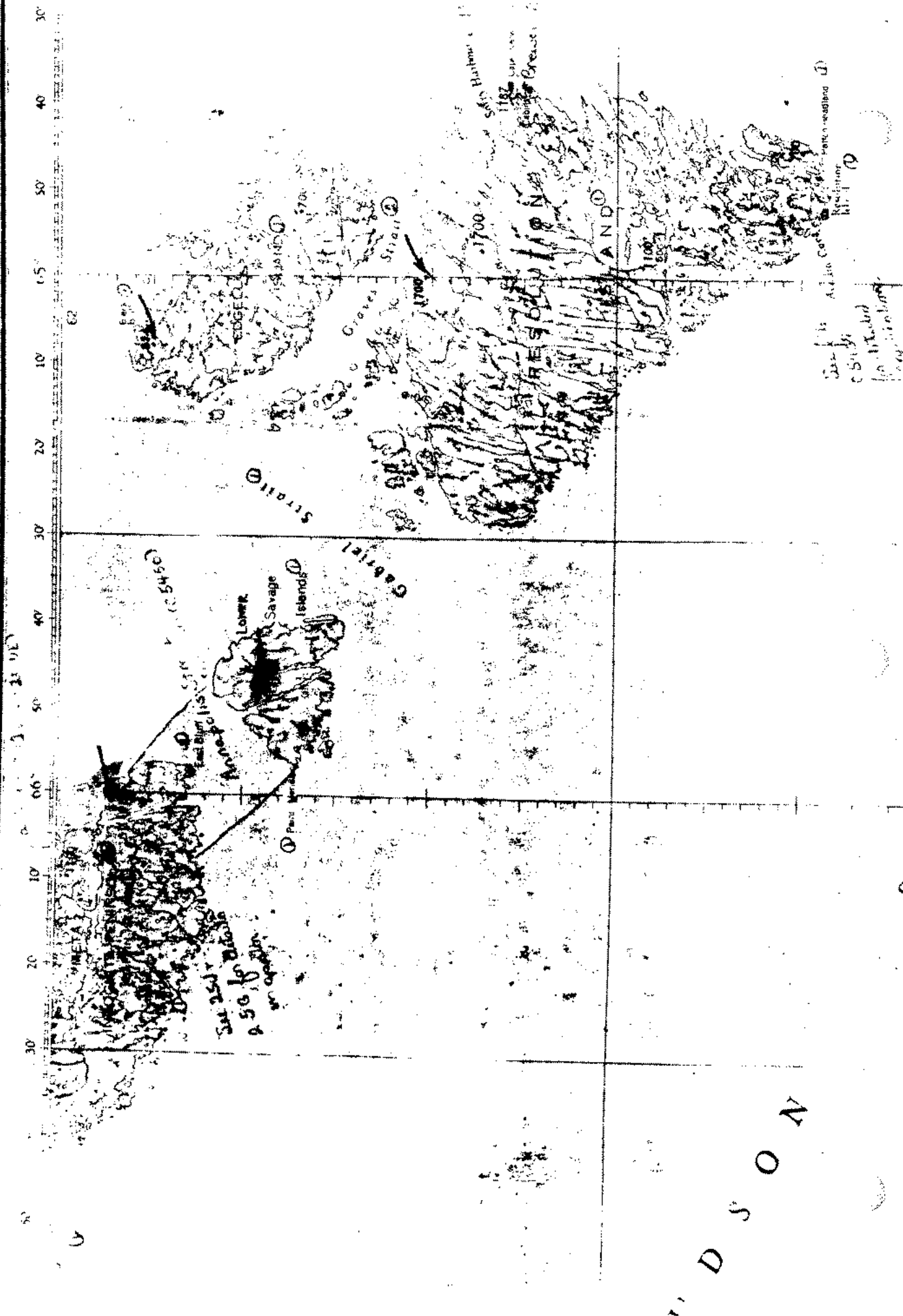
  
Alan Rayburn,  
Executive Secretary.

HK/dp

DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES  
SURVEYS AND MAPPING BRANCH

STZ

### FLAVATIONS IN FLEET

[illegible]

JOURNALISTS AGAIN SPEAKS OUT ON THE AUTHORSHIP

We are glad to see that Sydney J. Harris, the English-born newspaper writer, has devoted another column to the Shakespeare authorship, not hesitating to state that "I have long been one of the 'nuts' --along with Sigmund Freud, Henry James, Mark Twain and others - - who do not believe" that the Stratford man "was the true author." It is surprising to find Mr. Harris denying any "intrinsic literary value" to the question of the identity of the greatest writer in our tongue -- that is to deny the literary value of any writer's biography -- and a pity that he accepts the conventional misconceptions that Shakespeare of Stratford was a theatrical actor-manager, that his name was Shakespeare and that Ben Jonson said the author "had 'small Latin and less Greek.'" For the rest, our members

will heartily second Mr. Harris's observations, based on "The Comedy of Errors," on Shakespeare's ability to read the classics in Latin and Greek -- a skill beyond the attainments of the Stratford man. And they will be encouraged to have these observations voiced in 200 newspapers by a 39-year staff member of the Chicago Daily News, drama critic, author of seven highly-regarded books, 36-year faculty member of the University College of the University of Chicago and member of the panel on usage of the American Heritage Dictionary.

As the column appeared in the Savannah News-Press, the editor took the step, which must be an unusual departure from newspaper practice, of adding a postscript: "One thing's certain: We'll never REALLY know.-- Ed." It would be interesting to learn what reading the editor had done before arriving at that categorical judgment and seeing fit to announce it.

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## DEPARTMENT OF FEEDBACK

(Or How Fame Came to Your Editor and to Mr. Looney)

# The Washington Star

FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 1980

## Letters to the editor

### Orwell and the Earl of Oxford

I could not help but marvel at the singular likeness between the career of Eric Blair, as described in Edwin M. Yoder Jr.'s column, "The many masks of George Orwell" (April 3), and that of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

Like Blair, de Vere was a man who chose to remain anonymous; indeed, a man who, for some unknown consideration (the royalties, perhaps?) borrowed, or "hired," the name of an average run-of-the-mill journeyman actor on the London boards whose humble origin was in a small town named Stratford (because it was considered *de trop* for one of his — de Vere's — class to write material catering to popular appeal.)

Like Blair, de Vere was also a man who, in large part, often mocked the values of his own class, yet, ironically, could never shape them — indeed, a man whose guardian and godfather (William Burleigh) was lord chancellor of England and chief minister to the Queen and whose works not only pre-eminently mirrored but, indeed, in large part shaped the very spirit of his age.

When are all the high school teachers and college professors going to wake up and starting telling us these things?

Incidentally, there is a writer/novelist gentleman (of nationwide readership but whose name presently escapes me) residing in, I believe, McLean, Va., who some

years ago wrote an article for one of the Washington papers — possibly *The Star* — in which he gives a compelling (and I think convincing) account of the Shakespeare/de Vere relationship.

His article drew largely from the work of an English schoolmaster named, I believe, George Spooner, whose avocation was tracking down that relationship and who wrote a book about it which was published somewhere in the early '30s but the title of which escapes me. He was not, however, the Professor Spooner of "spoonerism" fame.

Spooner's book, by the way, went largely unappreciated, and when noticed — if at all — acquired scathing ridicule and criticism (unjustifiably, I think).

I have also heard (from another source) that Shakespeare was something of an Edward de Vere look-alike, an accomplished mimic, and that he aped de Vere's manner of behavior and speech. According to this source, de Vere recognized the comic ramifications of having at ready hand a convenient doppelganger — and so decided to use Shakespeare as his literary stand-in, so to speak, as a cosmic (though private) joke.

James H. Bell

Alexandria, Va.

## IRS REGULATIONS AND THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY

The following letter from the Internal Revenue Service clarifies the Shakespeare Oxford Society's current tax-exempt status. Please note that we have been given a new classification that reflects the fact that our organization receives most of its support from public contributions. The IRS letter also indicates the rule regarding contributions earmarked for use by a specific individual: all research results developed with such funds become the property of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and must be used by the Society under specific restrictions specified in the Income Tax Regulations. (Pertinent sections of the Regulations will appear in the next Newsletter for your information.)

Unfortunately, when the Society was selected at random for an audit in 1979, the IRS agent assigned to meet with the Executive Vice-President and myself discovered that recipients of two recent large grants had not fulfilled the requirements specified by law. Accordingly, the staff of the Shakespeare Oxford Society has notified the grantees and is attempting to follow the regulations in this matter as strictly as possible. Little by little we are bringing this situation under control. It is my hope that all financial reports and research related to the two grants will be in our hands by June 30.

In the future the Society may not accept contributions from those who wish to give funds to the Society that are in reality intended for specific individuals unless there is a clear understanding that IRS specifications are to be met, i.e., the funds must be used to the benefit of the Society and "not for the profit or use of any recipient other than the organization to which the contributions were addressed," as the IRS agent told me in person.

--Helen W. Cyr  
Secretary-Treasurer

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury

District  
Director

31 Hopkins Plaza, Baltimore, MD 21201

▷ The Shakespeare Oxford Society  
Inc.  
c/o Gordon C. Cyr  
110 Glen Argyle Road  
Baltimore, Maryland 21212

Person to Contact:

G. Cunningham  
Telephone Number:

301-962-3414  
Refer Reply to:

E:EO:7201:GC  
Date:

JUN 11 1979

Gentlemen:

- We are pleased to tell you that as a result of our examination of your Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax, for the period ending December 31, 1977, we will continue to recognize your organization as tax-exempt.

In our letter dated October 20, 1970, you were determined to be not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, because you were an organization described in section 509(a)(2). Based on our examination, however, we have determined that you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because you are an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

In addition, contributions to you which are earmarked for use by a specific individual who is conducting research on behalf of your organization are your funds. Furthermore, you have ownership of the results of the research which you funded and such results are to be made available to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis pursuant to section 1.501(c)(3)-1(d)(5)(iii)(a) of the Income Tax Regulations.

We have also determined that there is no change in your liability for the unrelated business income tax as provided by sections 511 through 515 of the Internal Revenue Code.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

  
Gerald G. Portney  
District Director



## SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AUTHORS IN BRITISH AND U.S. JOURNALS

by

Gordon C. Cyr  
Executive Vice-President

Members will recall our announcement in the Summer 1979 Newsletter (Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 7) of the inception of the Russell des Cognets Fund column in Dr. Louis Marder's The Shakespeare Newsletter, April 1979. SNL (to adopt Dr. Marder's own abbreviation) is published six times a year, and six issues have appeared since the one mentioned -- each carrying material either derived from that which the Society mails in response to inquiries or articles I have written expressly for the des Cognets Fund column.

In the latter category is a series of articles concentrating on the negative evidence (i.e., against William of Stratford's candidacy for "authorial honors"), including such titles as "Why Are There Doubts about 'Shakespeare's' Authorship?" (November 1979: XXIX, #5, p. 38) and "Some Common Replies to the 'Authorship Doubters'" (December 1979: XXIX, #6, p. 47). Future issues will contain the articles "How to Construct a 'Shakespeare Biography'" (primarily a commentary on the Stratfordians' shocked reaction to the six-part series on "Shakespeare's" life shown on Britain's Associated TV) and "A Prediction of the Oxford Theory?" (which reprints Sir George Greenwood's sub-chapter on the Sonnets from The Shakespeare Problems Restated).

As intimated in our own column last summer, the importance of this arrangement with Louis Marder and SNL lies in the wider dissemination accorded both the anti-Stratfordian and the Oxfordian arguments. That this has benefited the Oxfordian cause has been made manifest through the greater number of inquiries the Society has received from faculty members in various college and university English departments -- persons who comprise a large bulk of SNL's circulation.

At least two such English professors have solicited membership in the Shakespeare Oxford Society and have been mailed the appropriate materials and forms. Once again, the Shakespeare Oxford Society extends its gratitude to Trustee Russell des Cognets for his generosity in making this happen!

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Meanwhile, a welcome surprise arrived in the mail in the form of the Shakespearean Authorship Society's journal, The Bard (Vol. 2, No. 3). The latest issue of this British publication contains an article by S.O.S. Trustee Bronson Feldman, entitled "A Preface to Arden of Feversham" (pp.100 - 109). In this article, Dr. Feldman



lays out a scholarly summary of critical comment on this curious play and advances good reasons for assigning its authorship to Marlowe.

Following this issue of The Bard by several weeks was a communication from Dr. Feldman, from which we quote the following: "It delights me to report that Dr. D.W. Thomson Vessey (Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of England, Secretary of the Editorial Board of The Bard of London) has informed me that my article, 'A Tyrant's Vein,' will appear in Volume 2, Number 4. This little essay is the first demonstration of William Cecil's strong interest in the stage as a platform for political propaganda. Cecil is not well enough known as the founder of the first truly modern network of espionage and conspiracy for imperial purposes, including the bloody extinction of statesmen who stood in his road. The future father-in-law of Edward de Vere had been an amateur player in scholastic theatrical undertakings. (He may have acted Julius Caesar once, and told the future author of Hamlet how the Brutus of that day knifed him.) But no less important in 'A Tyrant's Vein' is the revelation of how a slip of the lance, verily Freudian, altered the history of France.

"The same edition of The Bard will contain a deep-searching review by Warren Hope, of Hamlet Himself by the undersigned ...

"The Editorial Board of The Bard considers printing of a long treatise I mailed them recently concerning the life and plays of Christopher Marlowe, showing how that volatile and perverse genius was a student of the stage in the actual service of Shakespeare. My treatise deals intensively with the Marlowe murder case, and Shakespeare's obituary remarks about him. In order to encourage the mentors of The Bard to publish it entire in one number of

The Bard, I plead for generous contributions to cross the Atlantic calling for this extraordinary edition. Please send checks to The Bard, in care of Dr. Thomas Vessey, 10 Uphill Grove, Mill Hill, London NW7 4NJ, England. To everyone who helps to speed this publication of my Marlowe from London, I will gladly send a free copy of Hamlet Himself and a complete set of the Crowners Quests [Feldman's own newsletter], as well as 'The Works of William Shakspeare, For the First Time Frankly and Fearlessly Set Forth,' at half-price, when I have finished the latter monster-piece, and found a press for it."

Members who are interested in heeding Dr. Feldman's plea and who wish to receive the materials he offers should address their requests to Dr. Bronson Feldman, 7844 Montgomery Avenue, Elkins Park, Perma. 19117.

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The same issue of The Bard to which Dr. Feldman refers above and which carries the Warren Hope review and his article, "A Tyrant's Vein," will also publish my own article, "Oxford's and Shakespeare's Musical 'Jacks'," in which I finally get around to correcting an error of long standing, perpetrated by Oxfordians from Captain Bernard M. Ward up to the Reverend Francis Edwards (Chairman of the Editorial Board of The Bard), with a few others in between. The error results from misunderstanding the nature of 16th - 18th century keyboard instruments, such as the harpsichord (or the "virginals" of Tudor and Elizabethan England), of which the jacks formed such an important part. The article compares and contrasts the use of virginal jacks as a literary metaphor both in the 17th Earl of Oxford's legendary remark at the execution of Essex ("When jacks start up, heads go down") and in Shakespeare's Sonnet 128. I endeavor to show that both usages -- despite their quite dissimilar applications -- may have yet another intended connotation, and the same one in both instances. I hope to show also that all of this argues for the Earl of Oxford's authorship of Sonnet 128.

The Shakespeare Oxford Society wishes to thank the Editorial Board of The Bard for its forthcoming "American Issue," and we express the hope that our members will subscribe and contribute to this invaluable scholarly publication.

#### SHAKESPEARE NEWSLETTER USES S.O.S. NEWSLETTER AS SOURCE FOR "ASHBOURNE" RELEASE

Those members of the Shakespeare Oxford Society who felt some misgivings about our release of the Folger Library's new findings with respect to the "Ashbourne" portrait last year (See S.O.S. Newsletter Summer 1979, Vol. 15, No. 3, and Fall 1979, Vol. 15, No. 4) may take some comfort in the handling of this event in Dr. Marder's The Shakespeare Newsletter of November 1979 (Vol. XXIX:No. 5).

Beginning on the front page of that issue, a three-column story bearing the headline, "132 Year Mystery Solved: Ashbourne Portrait Now Proved to be Lord Mayor," gives full credit to the Shakespeare Oxford Society and its Executive Vice-President for providing the sources (through the S.O.S. Newsletter articles) for the SNL item. Louis Marder (who signed the SNL article) also alludes to the singular fact that Dr. O. B. Hardison, the Folger Library's director, sent only his copy of our Newsletter to Marder when the latter requested further information on the subject. (The Folger Shakespeare Library has issued no public statement of its own on the "Ashbourne" portrait findings.)

The SNL article summarizes the history of the "Ashbourne" portrait -- insofar as this is known -- from its clouded acquisition in 1847 by the Reverend Clement Usill Kingston through its subsequent transfers and evaluations by such authorities as Abraham Wivell, Samuel Timmins, and M. H. Spielmann, the 1928 purchase of Eustace

Conway, C. S. de Vere Beauclerk's examination, and the whole four-decade-long controversy following Charles Wisner Barrell's x-ray and infrared photographs and his January 1940 Scientific American article.

Dr. Marder then summarizes the findings of Peter Michaels, reported in our article and adds a remark of his own (in discussing the remarkable correspondences de Vere Beauclerk found between the "Ashbourne" and the Welbeck portrait of Oxford) about "what no one in this controversy seems to have noted -- --the oft forgotten fact that many painters used classic dimensions making the proportions of most faces similar."

That the new "Ashbourne" revelations have no bearing on the authorship argument is implicit in two other comments made by Dr. Marder, who says, "While gracefully and philosophically accepting the new evidence against the Ashbourne portrait being Oxford, the Oxfordians naturally continue to press their claims for Oxford's authorship. They insist that Barrell and others have brought forward much other evidence for Oxford to substantiate the original work of John Thomas Looney (lone-y) ...and Capt. Bernard M. Ward ..."

Later in the article Marder tells something about the history of forged pictorial representations of "Shakespeare": "The forgery of Shakespeare's portrait is well documented. Copies are legion. The fraudulent portraits by Hilder, Edward Holder, and F. W. Zincke were sold unashamedly in London. Old paintings were purchased and altered. Zincke declared he had a large family to feed. People wanted to be fooled! During the first 42 years of the National Portrait Gallery it was offered more than 5 dozen Shakespeares. Sir Sidney Lee was asked to authenticate 30 portraits in a ten-year period." In this context, it is clear that the "Ashbourne" is just another eighteenth or nineteenth century forgery -- perhaps even one of the Zincke or Holder jobs that has hitherto escaped detection.

(In this connection, Oxfordians might well keep in mind the longstanding controversy

over the so-called "Grafton" portrait of "Shakespeare." There has been some evidence developed which tends to identify this as a portrait of Marlowe. If this identification ever became positive, Oxfordians would rightly discount this as evidence for Marlow's authorship of Shakespeare's poems and plays.)

The Shakespeare Oxford Society and its members have not suffered -- indeed may have benefited -- from an early disassociation from this argument. There are some very wise words quoted by Sir George Greenwood at the end of his book, Is There a Shakespeare Problem? (John Lane, 1916, p. 578). Sir George attributes these to an unidentified "old writer": "However sure thou mayest be of thy hypothesis, take heed that among the arguments by which thou goest about to uphold it there be none which are faulty and unsound, lest, should these be made manifest, the truth may be doubted of, as though it were only based upon such frail supports."

Gordon C. Cyr

#### POSTSCRIPT

In The Shakespeare Newsletter issue of February 1980 (XXIX: 1, page 9), Louis Marder makes the following correction to the "Ashbourne" portrait article described above: "In a letter to SNL dated Dec. 28, 1979, Gordon Cyr pointed out an error I derived from Ruth L. Miller's edition of J. Thomas Looney's Shakespeare Identified and which she had derived from C.W. Barrell, who, when his memory was hazy, told her that the Fogg Museum had treated the Ashbourne portrait of Oxford. When Mrs. Gordon (Helen) Cyr applied to Fogg for details no report could be found. The mystery was cleared up by Dr. O.B. Hardison just last year (1979) -- it was the Fine Arts Museum of Boston that had treated the Ashbourne portrait. LM"

#### OXFORD'S HANDWRITING

We have recently received an interesting communication from a demographer and polisologist, Tertius Chandler, late of Connecticut, now of Berkeley, California, and a candidate for Congress. Mr. Chandler had the provocative idea of sending a copy of a letter of Oxford's (one to Burghley of October 1584) to a leading analyst of handwriting, Muriel Stafford, who had been invited to demonstrate her skill at the White House by Franklin D. Roosevelt and for years had written on graphology for magazines in the United States, England and Canada. It should be emphasized that far from being guided in her analysis by a conception of Oxford as Shakespeare Ms. Stafford did not know who the author of the letter was, the signature in the copy provided by Mr. Chandler being indecipherable. She writes:

"Your friend with the illegible signature and difficult-to-see handwriting is certainly a genius with extraordinary literary talent. He has a swi intactive, brilliant mind. His personality can be charming if he's interested but when bored he can become moody and impatient.

"His concentration is so intense he may have difficulty in judging a situation or problem as a whole but he certainly can see all the details. He has such an intactive sense he may appear to be psychic in his hunches. He is also likely to be deeply religious.

"He is extremely selective in his friends. Most people just don't interest him and I would expect he dislikes big gatherings. A 'one-on-one' person.

"Muriel Stafford, April 1980."

We certainly agree with Mr. Chandler that the analysis is "a pip." While none of our dictionaries gives "intactive," Ms. Stafford has for the rest, it seems to us, given a thumbnail portrait of Oxford th is almost uncanny, hardly to be improve

upon by one who had read his biography and recognized him as Shakespeare. "The only thing that might not fit," in Mr. Chandler's view, "is the part about being 'extremely religious' -- and that is given with doubt, as merely 'likely.'" It does seem, however, that a fundamentally religious view of life may be accompanied by total skepticism as to human ability to fathom the mysteries, and that this is likely to have been where Oxford had come out by the time he had entered upon the years of his literary greatness. As for his propensity to become moody and impatient when bored, it was probably this that made Anne Cecil the unhappy wife she was, just as Anne Vavasor--Rosaline-Beatrice--doubtless found Oxford as charming as Berowne-Benedick. His dislike of big gatherings was surely illustrated by the antipathy he soon began to feel for the Court and his alienation from it and by his lifelong preference for the company of writers and their kind, who generally consort by twos or threes. His acute, imaginative perception of details at a cost of a lesser grasp of the larger situation comes out in the plays, which with, of course, exceptions are far greater speech-by-speech than as organic wholes. If it were not for the brilliance of individual passages, plays like "Troilus and Cressida" and "Measure for Measure" would not be greatly missed, while "Antony and Cleopatra," perhaps the greatest and most fascinating work in English in its evocation of character and of the interaction of character, is almost unplayable as a drama; as far as is known no staging of the superlative tragedy was attempted, apart from an abridged and altered version by David Garrick in 1759, before 1833. As Frank Harris says, "Shakespeare ... was nearly always an indifferent playwright, careless of the architectural construction of his pieces, contemptuous of stage-craft." (And Stratfordians tell us that Shakespeare's simple purpose was to supply the commercial stage with box office attractions!)

Mr. Chandler reports that Ms. Stafford wrote to ask him who the literary genius was. It is a question that few professors of English could answer--or would openly.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

From S.O.S. Member Celeste Ashley,  
Palo Alto, California.

"...upon receipt of your letter and the article ("The Many Guises of Edward de Vere," S.O.S. Newsletter, Vol. 15, No. 4) ... I went to the stacks for Golding's Metamorphoses and started re-reading it. It was not too long before I concluded that they were Golding's -- and his alone. The antique meter alone would rule out de Vere. ... We stand in danger of letting our enthusiasm run away with us and of thus being also guilty of bardolatry.

"Proof of Vere's authorship may never be conclusively uncovered -- we must face this fact -- but evidence can be slowly uncovered that may point finally in his direction -- without undermining Golding's works -- or any other person's contribution to the Canon."

(Reply to Celeste Ashley)

"The antique meter" of the "Golding" translation of "The Metamorphoses" -- iambic heptameter couplets--is exactly that of "Verses Made by the Earl of Oxford" (see the preceding issue of the Newsletter). The statement that "evidence can be slowly uncovered that may point finally in his [Oxford's] direction" as Shakespeare would have been warranted, we suggest with all due respect, sixty-some years ago, before the publication of J. T. Looney's "'Shakespeare' Identified," a score of other subsequent books and three or four times as many articles on the subject.

The writer's warning of the error of "bardolatry" touches on a matter that has long been rankling with us. Of the word "bard," the Oxford Universal Dictionary says that it was originally a term of contempt idealized by Scott. A bard, according to this authority, is a member of an ancient order of Celtic minstrel poets, in Wales a poet who has been recognized at the Eisteddfod, in early Lowland Scottish a strolling musician or minstrel, in Old English a gleeman, of the root of our glee-club. Now, there may be some far-fetched justification for applying the designation to Shakespeare by those who find his poems and plays to be the native wood notes wild of the untutored provincial whom Anita Loos's dizzy heroine of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" called "The Bird of Avon." To anyone, however, who recognizes Shakespeare's works as the highly sophisticated product of one of the most cultivated minds of his day, of a supreme artist in words, the likening of their creator to a wandering minstrel or gleeman must appear grotesque. We recognize that this opinion puts us at odds with our British colleagues, who have renamed their quarterly, "The Bard." All we can say is that at the time they were considering the change we pleaded with them to consider the unbridgeable gulf between the meaning of "bard" and the character of Shakespeare.

We may appropriately repeat the title of an article on the identity of Shakespeare by Byron Rogers in the London Sunday Telegraph: BARD THOU NEVER WERT.

#### MEA CULPA DEPARTMENT

Anyone who has written for the National Geographic Society or Reader's Digest and had his text pored over by their "checkers" (researchers less like the Nixon's amiable spaniel of that name than like Legree's bloodhounds) will never again repose any confidence in

his own ability to avoid the most blatant mistakes. Whenever thereafter he goes to press without having been made an honest--let us say dependable--writer of one of these sleuths he does so with a failing heart, and always with reason. He must learn to say things like:-

We are grateful to Dr. Bronson Feldman for having pointed out that Arthur Brooke's "Romeus and Juliet" is a poem, not a play, as we had it in the autumn issue of the Newsletter. Presumably we had in the back of our mind its having been inspired by a play. At least we hope we are not guilty of a Freudian wish for a play in iambic heptameter couplets.

What led us in the same article to write that "No poetry of Lyly's has ever come down to us except the lyrics in his plays" is less easy to guess, particularly when Lyly's verses on Oxford in the Battle of the Armada occupy a secure place in our mind. Evidently what we were thinking of was that Lyly would probably not have come down to us as a poet except for the lyrics in his plays. At least, the eleven poems attributed to him in the "Oxford Book of 16th Century Verse" all are from the plays and probably by de Vere.

For the future we promise more egregious errors.

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## IF INVITED TO WRIT; HE WAS IN PAINE

by

Gordon C. Cyr  
and  
Helen W. Cyr

Antiquarian John Aubrey's words of nearly three hundred years ago,<sup>1</sup> which form this article's title and refer to William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon (commonly supposed to be the author of "Shakespeare's Works"), could well be the concluding remarks of a recent forensic examination of Shakspeare's handwriting commissioned by the Shakespeare Oxford Society. The entire canon of Shakspeare's known penmanship consists of six signatures, plus the words "By me" preceding the last of them, all of which appear on legal and property documents and all written within the last five years of his life. Various attempts to augment the canon have been made, either by outright forgeries (such as those by Jordan and Ireland) or by the "discovery" of additional signatures or writing believed to resemble Shakspeare's accepted signatures, e.g., the scene from Sir Thomas More to be discussed below--see also article following. But none of these attempts has been universally accepted, and the possibility of yet-undetected forgery hovers over this whole aspect of Shakespearean investigation--thanks largely to Ireland's near successor and to a public hungry for evidence in a field where so little exists.

Aubrey, of course, did not have this whole canon available to him when he penned the words of our title. His reputation for reliability is suspect today mostly because he seldom bothered to separate rumour and hearsay from verifiable facts (or even from viable traditions), and his cited remarks here about Shakspeare's avoidance of writing occur as the last leg of a typically horrendous non sequitur. Shakespearean commentators have made valiant efforts to clean up Aubrey's reputation (mostly by impeaching the derogatory testimony of his employer, Anthony Wood), solely, there is reason to believe, in order to rescue Aubrey's improbable statement that Shakspeare had been a "country schoolmaster" in his youth--a statement for which Aubrey is the solitary source. Stratfordian scholars argue that Aubrey's own source was William Beeston, the son of one of Shakspeare's fellow actors--hearsay at best. But if the testimony of this actor's son is to be accepted, what is the area of Shakspeare's life that most impinges on that of Beeston's? It would be the London years, of course, rather than the more remote early Stratford period. When Aubrey is describing Shakspeare's personal characteristics (including his excuses for not writing when invited), the London context appears clearly.

In any event, according to the forensic study of Shakspeare's six signatures conducted by Dr. Wilson Harrison, one of the foremost of Scotland Yard's erstwhile document examiners (and also according to the preliminary "feasibility study" by Joseph English of the Forensic Science Laboratory in Washington, D.C.), John Aubrey may have had full warrant for the remarks borrowed for our title--whatever significance these findings have on the authorship question. But before discussing this important investigation, a few words are in order about the Shakspeare signatures themselves and a brief history of the controversies surrounding them. The six, in chronological order,<sup>3</sup> are

1. Deposition in a suit brought by Stephen Bellott vs. his father-in-law, Christopher Mountjoy, May 11, 1612 (Public Record Office Museum).



2. Conveyance of a gatehouse in the Blackfriars district, London, purchased by Shakspeare, March 10, 1613 (Guildhall Library).
3. Mortgage deed of Blackfriars gatehouse, reconveyed to Henry Walker, March 11, 1613 (British Museum).
4. Last Will and Testament, page 1, March 25, 1616 (Public Record Office Museum).
5. Last Will and Testament, page 2, March 25, 1616 (Public Record Office Museum).
6. Last Will and Testament, page 3, March 25, 1616 (Public Record Office Museum) (Signed "By me William Shakspeare"<sup>4</sup>).

As can be seen by the examples illustrated on pages 3 and 4, these signatures all differ markedly each from the other. And except among the starry-eyed, the impression that the signatures first make is best described in the words of Sir George Greenwood, "...I think few impartial observers would deny that they are terrible scrawls, whatever reason may be suggested to account for that fact."<sup>5</sup> Remarking that these signatures represent the writing of a man universally put forward as the author of some of the greatest literary works in history, Sir George says further, "It certainly occasions us something in the nature of a shock when we compare the scrawls which are said to be Shakespeare's signatures with the beautiful writing (in 'the sweet Roman hand') of (e.g.) Joshua Sylvester, Jonson, or Bacon ... Going back to earlier days, we find that Edmund Spenser (1552 - 99) wrote an eminently legible hand..."<sup>6</sup> The "sweet Roman hand" refers to the "Italian style," which resembles modern script. Shakespeare, he it noted, did not write in this style--which was being adopted increasingly by professional writers and courtiers--but in the "Secretary hand" (or "Old English" as some commentators call it), in which most of the writing of Tudor and Jacobean England was conducted. Certainly, not too much can be made of this fact, however, especially as an indicator of Shakespeare's education. The very learned poet George Chapman wrote in a quite legible "Old English" script, as did many playwrights and scholars from earlier times.

The poor quality of these signatures, along with the wide variations in the formation of letters, has given rise to a number of intriguing theories, namely various views that more than one person may have contributed to these signatures. Prominent among such theories was the one in which Sir George Greenwood, in talking about the last signature on Shakespeare's will #6], said, "I have also taken upon me to assert with entire confidence that the words 'By me William,' in Shakespeare's third Will signature, were not written by the testator, but by some low clerk or scrivener on his behalf."<sup>7</sup> As evidence for this opinion, Sir George adduced the superiority of the three words (including the first name) in both quality of penmanship and horizontal alignment vis-a-vis the uphill shakiness of the surname. In his report to the Shakespeare Oxford Society 1977 conference, document examiner Joseph English supported Greenwood's opinion, and found further that the Bellott-Mountjoy and Blackfriars Gatehouse Conveyance signatures in Guildhall #1 and 2], "revealed enough differences to suggest that two persons were involved in their execution." Dr. Wilson Harrison, however, in having the advantage of a microscopic inspection of the originals, disposes of these contentions in his report, as we shall see below.

Another prominent theory was that of John Pym-Yeatman, who in a pamphlet Is William Shakespeare's Will Holographic? (London 1901), tried to prove that the testator drafted and wrote the Will himself. Dr. Harrison disposes of Mr. Pym-Yeatman's theory as well.

Finally, assuming that all six signatures are authentic specimens of Shakespeare's handwriting, many scholars have attempted to find the Stratford citizen's hand in various earlier

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BLOTT-  
MOUNTJOY

#2

**BLACKPRIARS  
MORTGAGE**

Adrian  
C. J. P.

3

## BLACKPRIARS MORTGAGE

THE



WILL P.1

#4

My dear Mr. Will

#5

My dear Mr. Will

WILL P.2

#6

My dear Mr. Will

WILL P.3

scripts related to the theater or literature, such as Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's 1916 theory to the effect that Shakapere had written a three-page "Addition" to "The Booke of Sir Thomas More," an old manuscript play. Inasmuch as this play is very much in the newe today (see following article in this issue), we will deal with Dr. Harrison's remarks on this theory in detail later.

Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, who was Librarian of the British Museum at the beginning of this century, was a prominent paleographer, i.e., a student of ancient handwriting. He had done much valuable work in this field, especially in relation to Shakespearean scholarship. It was Sir Edward who, in effect, established the canon of six authentic signatures, and he successfully resisted attempts by many partisan Shakespeareologists to find the Stratford citizen's signature on the flyleaves of sundry incunabula supposed to have been owned by the poet (inasmuch as they formed the sources for much of Shakespeare's work), such as Ovid's Metamorphoses, Florio's Montaigne, and North's Plutarch. Sir Edward successfully dispatched these forgeries to the dustbins of scholarship, and no one today seriously maintains them to be genuine.

But paleography is not the same as modern forensic science. The present writers conceived the idea a few years ago of letting some professional document examiners loose on these somewhat notorious specimens. The feeling was that all that the venerable science of paleography could do had been done--and done ably by Sir Edward Maunde Thompson. But he did not have at his disposal the techniques that enable document examiners to build a handwriting authorship case that will hold up in a court of law. Such things as how the pen was held, what types of strokes are characteristic of one person's handwriting vis-a-vis another who signs for him--and, uniquely in the case of Dr. Harrison's investigation, the ratio of tall and short letters--all these are aspects of detection that have been refined in the decades following Sir Edward's analyses. As long as doubt remained about the authorship of any Shakespeare signature (or portions of a signature), we felt justified in pursuing any type of investigation that would help to remove these doubts. And did not Sir Edward himself contribute to these doubts when he said about the three Will signatures [4,5,6], "...they differ from one another to such a degree that it is not going too far to declare that, were they met with on three independent documents, they might not unreasonably be taken, at first sight, for the signatures of three different persons. And, besides their intrinsic dissimilarity, the methods of writing them vary also."<sup>7</sup>

Thus it came about that the Shakespeare Oxford Society engaged two specialists in forensic document examination, one on either side of the Atlantic. The first was Joseph English of the Forensic Science Laboratory in Washington, D.C. and Lecturer in Law at Georgetown University. In order not to prejudice Prof. English's investigation, we told him nothing about the five signaturee (#4, the first page of the Will, was omitted because modern reproductions show very little of this decayed specimen) except the person who was alleged to have written them. Prof. English was charged with the question: Is there any evidence to show that the five submitted signatures (or portions of any signature) were not all written by the same person?

It must be remembered that the only reproductions of the handwriting sampling that were available in this country were halftone prints. Further, Prof. English did not have time to investigate the documents to which this handwriting was attached. In his report delivered to the Shakespeare Oxford Society's National Conference October 15, 1977, Prof. English concluded that

1. "[#1 and 2] revealed enough differences to suggest that two persons were involved in their execution," and that "they are more smoothly executed than [3,5, and 6]."

2. The surnames of [#5 and 6] "are sufficiently similar in the subtler aspects of their execution to have been written by one person." "Some of these features which are characteristic of [#5 and 6] can be seen in [#3] as well..."
3. "The first name 'William' of [#5] is of a writing quality which is consistent with the last name [#5 and 6]. However, the 'William' of [#6] is not."
4. "The person who wrote... [#5] and 'Shakspeare' #6, gives indications of being unaccustomed to writing and did not write the 'William' of [#6]; nor did he write either first or last name of [#1 or 2], unless the original documents bearing these signatures or some drastic change in physiological condition reveals a plausible explanation for the differences noted."

When comparing all this with the quite different conclusions in Wilson Harrison's report, to be described below, the reader should keep in mind the limitations surrounding Joseph English's investigation mentioned earlier. The latter's report mentions one of these, and adds a possibility discussed in more detail in Dr. Harrison's finding: "The examination of copies of whatever nature as opposed to original documents obviously poses certain difficulties in addition to whatever challenges the documents themselves may present. In the current five instances, the copies involve the further complication of being halftone reproductions... [The possibility] of changed condition of physical health or that of neuromuscular control over time could not safely be eliminated, it was felt. For this reason, the observations which follow must be taken as qualified and therefore subject to considerable further study [Emphasis ours]."

The further study urged by Prof. English was for the Society to have a forensic examination of the originals housed in England. He recommended Dr. Wilson Harrison as the top specialist in Britain. Certainly, the credentials Dr. Harrison bears are impressive: his activities, beginning in 1934, include his positions as founding Director of the Home Office Forensic Science Laboratory in Cardiff, document examination for Scotland Yard and the Fraud Squad, as well as the Treasury, Post Office, Customs & Excise, and many others. During World War II, he undertook document examinations for the American Forces in Europe and has worked also for many foreign governments. He has examined and reported on the Casement and Grivas diaries and assisted in the Profumo Enquiry. Upon retirement in 1963, Dr. Harrison has undertaken document examinations for various British government departments, foreign governments, banks, insurance companies and business concerns both domestic and foreign. He is author of two books, Suspect Documents, Their Scientific Examination (1958, 1966), and Forgery Detection (1963), in addition to numerous articles on document examination published in various criminological journals.

Since 1963, Wilson Harrison has been, with his daughter Elizabeth Harrison, in private practice as a consultant document examiner. When he agreed to undertake the investigation for the Shakespeare Oxford Society, a subscription fund to pay Dr. Harrison's fee was raised among certain members. Contributions were made by Vice-Presidents S. Colum Gilfillan and Francis G. Horne, and S.O.S. Trustee Morse Johnson, to whom the authors of this article wish to express their gratitude in making this study possible. As with Joseph English, Dr. Harrison was not informed of the Society's stand on the authorship issue, nor about the nature of Prof. English's findings. When furnished with the halftone reproductions we had previously supplied to Mr. English, Dr. Harrison's initial impression appeared to support that of his American colleague: "I must say that the signatures present a peculiar appearance if they were indeed the work of a man educated in a good grammar school who must have used the pen extensively when writing his plays. The collected edition makes a formidable amount and anyone setting out to make one copy, without amendments or second thoughts--of those parts thought to be the work of W. S. himself, and leaving out anything which might have been written by other parties--should have got sufficient practice with the pen to

have given the writer an established and facile hand. There were no tape-recorders in Tudor times and I cannot imagine W. S. dictating everything to a secretary. Whoever wrote the plays must have had extensive practice with the pen but there is little apparent evidence of this in the photographs. I can well understand why doubts have arisen about their authenticity."<sup>9</sup>

To prepare for his study, Dr. Harrison made a study of the quill pen--even to the extent of gaining some practice in its use--in order to determine what bearing its characteristics might have on writing from the Tudor and Jacobean periods, and particularly on Shakespeare's pen habits. The document examiner also acquainted himself with the Secretary Hand. In this he was aided by a librarian in Cardiff who had some expertise as an antiquarian and amateur paleographer. Before gaining access to the originals themselves, Harrison made a preliminary examination of the documents reproduced in Samuel Schoenbaum's William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life (Oxford/Scolar 1975) in addition to other illustrations in that book in which the name "William Shakespeare" (in many variant forms) is written by a clerk or scrivener.

It then remained to make appointments with the various museums housing the documents, obtain permission to examine them in a strong light, and to be provided with photographs with a magnification of three times linearly. All of these conditions were satisfactorily met by the spring of 1979, and the report was delivered to the Shakespeare Oxford Society in July of that year.

Dr. Harrison's conclusion was, "that there was no evidence I could find which suggested that these six signatures were not the work of one hand." There were two principal characteristics of Shakespeare's hand that guided the examiner in reaching this conclusion. The first (described in his report under the subheading, "The ratio of handwriting") was a comparison of the "tall" letters, such as b, f, h, and l, with the average heights of "short" letters, such as a, c, e, o, etc. in any given handwriting sample. According to Harrison, the Secretary Hand has a greater variation between tall and short letters: the tall ones are relatively much taller than the short letters. But about Shakespeare's writing, he has found, "in view of the poor quality of the handwriting, all the six signatures...indicate that, unlike the conventional style of the Secretary Hand, the writer had a ratio which was, to my mind, significantly different. The tall letters of the signature, taken as a whole, do not show a great disparity in height when compared with the short letters." Further, Dr. Harrison suggests that the reader should, "examine the name 'Shakespeare' [it actually is written 'Shakspeare'] at the top of p. 1 of the Will illustrated opposite p. 242 of Schoenbaum's book. Note the ratio of this writing and you will find that, like the text of the Will, the handwriting has the ratio characteristic of the Secretary Hand with its wide divergence between the heights of the tall and short letters, a feature foreign to the handwriting of both of the legible signatures on the Will."

It is for this reason that Harrison rejects those hypotheses which assume that either Shakespeare wrote the Will text himself or that portions of his three putative signatures on that document could have been written by the person who drafted the Will. On this last point, Harrison specifically stated, "If W. S. was 'assisted' by a bystander to sign his will, I find it hard to believe that the assistant wrote 'by me William' and then handed the document over to a sick man to complete and having done so, urged the sick man to attempt to put two extra complete signatures on the other two pages. In a long experience of Wills signed in peculiar manners and places, I have yet to come across such a strange procedure. One thing I can be sure of: the William was not written by the person who drafted the Will, for at the outset, this person...wrote the name of the testator as any attorney was wont to do when drafting a Will, so that direct comparison is possible."<sup>10</sup>

The second Shaksperian feature that caught the investigator's attention was the relatively wide spacing between the first and last names. He asks in his report, "Are the two examples of wide separation of forename and surname found in the signatures on the Will a normal feature or do they stem from the extra care taken by a sick man to avoid any chance of overwriting? As it happens, this point is easily checked for we find the same feature in the Bellott-Mountjoy signature [#1] written some years earlier." Because of Shakspeare's attempt to crowd the Blackfriars signatures [#2 and 3] onto a narrow seal, no further comparisons are available, says Harrison. But this is one characteristic that he would look for if any signature were to be put forward in the future, after testing first for the ratio of tall and short letters described above.

A third characteristic can be added to the two mentioned: in all six signatures,<sup>11</sup> the first name is written with more facility than the last name. Harrison said that, in his own experiments with the quill pen, he found that letters with vertical strokes were easier of execution than letters with horizontal strokes (such as the capital S of Shakspeare's surname). "William" consists almost entirely of such vertical strokes and is always better written than the scrawled "Shaksperes" following (which present so many variants of letter formation that paleographers differ widely in their reading of them!). To account for this apparent difficulty Shakspeare experienced in signing his last name, Harrison gives as his opinion: "If [Shakspeare] was suffering from some complaint in 1612...which affected the nervous control of his fingers, this would explain why he found it so much easier to write the one [forename] rather than the other." But, as Harrison says elsewhere in his report, we have no medical evidence for Shakspeare's last years (or, we may add, for the rest of his life either). Certainly the Will signatures give evidence of deteriorating health, if, as Harrison contends (on the basis of lawyer's traditional habits of drawing up wills, in which the testator is often asked to sign each page after the main signature), [#6] was signed first, followed at a later date by [#4 & 5].

#### Wilson Harrison's Report and "The Booke of Sir Thomas More"

A theme that runs throughout Dr. Harrison's report is the caution with which a document examiner must deal with signatures of a man who has retired from active life, especially those written during a terminal illness. "In my opinion," he says, "it is futile to attempt more than a guess as to how a man wrote when in his prime on the basis of a few signatures written during the comparatively short interval between retirement...and death... It might well be the case that there are writings extant which were made by William [Shakspeare] in his prime and, I believe, attempts have been made to make a comparison with the six signatures as a basis...but I would need a great deal of convincing that anything reliable could come out of such an investigation based, as it would have to be, on such poor and scanty exemplars."

These thoughts are germane, of course, to the numerous attempts by sundry enthusiasts to find "Shakespeare's handwriting" in various marginalia of books that the poet is supposed to have used as sources, such as Hall's or Holinshed's chronicle histories--or in other manuscript fragments assumed to be wholly or in part of Shakespearean authorship. The most persistent of the latter type is Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's theory<sup>12</sup> that a three-page "Addition" to an anonymous Elizabethan play, "The Booke of Sir Thomas More," is both composed by the author of "Hamlet," etc., and in the handwriting of the Stratford Shakspeare. If such a proposition were true, of course, it would be strong evidence for the traditional contention that the two persons were identical.

But the second part of Sir Edward's theory was promptly challenged, not only by such drea "heretics" as Sir George Greenwood and Canon Gerald Rendall, but by the impeccably "orthodox" Sir Sidney Lee and Samuel Tannenbaum. As if in anticipation of Wilson Harrison's re-

port a half century later, Dr. Tannenbaum (an M.D., incidentally, who gives some interesting medical testimony about Shakspeare's signatures) criticizes Sir Edward's theory and the assumptions on which it is based: "Now, it is a principle in the science of 'bibliotics' that a questioned document must be compared with unquestioned writings of the same species, i.e., signatures with signatures, scribbled notes with scribbled notes, formal writings with formal writings, etc. Notwithstanding this however, it must be admitted that with enough writing of one species as a standard of comparison, it is not impossible to reach a positive conclusion as to the genuineness or non-genuineness of a questioned specimen of another species. But--and this bears repetition--there must be enough standard writing available."<sup>13</sup> Tannenbaum then goes on to state the obvious, to wit, that this is certainly not the case with Shakspeare's signatures, nor are the conditions of writing them the same.

Canon Gerald H. Rendall--an Oxfordian of formidable scholarly credentials--takes a different tack, and cites one Stratfordian authority: "Further, in his critical examination of The Text of Shakespeare's Hamlet, Dr. Van Dam pronounces a no less uncompromising verdict, and carries the argument a step further in insisting that the Hand D text, the portion supposed to be in Shakspeare's handwriting, is the work of a transcriber, and not of the original composer. On this I lay stress... Had the MS been in the hand of Shakspeare, that would in fact be proof that he was not the author. False punctuation and distribution of lines, and not a few of the interlineations and corrections, prove that the MS is the work of a transcriber."<sup>14</sup> Rendall cites some examples of this evidence in the text following these remarks.

Despite these impressive objections--from every side of the authorship issue--there has been a tendency in the decades following Sir Edward's published pronouncements of his theory to accept it as proven. Unfortunately, several Shakespearean scholars who have done invaluable bibliographic service, A. W. Pollard and Walter Greg in particular, had lent their reputations in support of this flimsy notion (see note #12), and this fact has unduly influenced more recent commentators, such as Schoenbaum, Gwynne Evans, and Harry Levin, to swallow it whole.

Two monkey wrenches, however, have come along within the space of a year which bring this pet fantasy to a crashing halt. One of these is Thomas Merriam's computer study claiming the whole authorship of "Sir Thomas More" for Shakespeare. With this intriguing concept and its implications, we will deal in the article following. The other monkey wrench is Dr. Wilson Harrison's report, which, it must be remembered, represents the closest look that Shakspeare's known handwriting has received in modern times. Referring specifically to the "Sir Thomas More" fragment (reproduced in Schoenbaum's A Documentary Life opposite p. 159), Harrison states, "If this were written by W. S., then at that time ca. 1601 he was at least a decade younger than when he wrote the signatures at the end of his life, and, presumably still pursuing an active career in London. In my opinion, six sometimes fragmentary signatures written by an ailing man constitute a poor basis on which to reach any definite conclusion as to authorship."<sup>10</sup> In other words, the verdict on Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's fond theory must remain: not proven.

#### Implications for the Authorship

On the basis of Wilson Harrison's findings, Stratfordians are entitled to argue that considerations of authorship founded on Shakspeare's supposed "illiteracy" (at least in the legal sense of the term) cannot be maintained. Such a revelation need cause anti-Stratfordians no discomfort whatever. One of the wisest writers of the latter persuasion, Sir Granville George Greenwood, wrote that any anti-Stratfordian who contended that Shakspeare was unable to write was, "busily engaged in the suicidal operation of sawing off the bough upon which he sits. For the [anti-Stratfordian] hypothesis is that Shakspeare's name, in

the altered form of 'Shakespeare' or 'Shake-speare,' was adopted as a pseudonym by the real author of the Plays and Poems..., whence it naturally followed that the authorship of these was subsequently attributed to the Stratford player." One who thus argues, "would have us believe that the real author...deliberately selected as a pseudonym the name of an entirely uneducated and illiterate man, and that this Stratford 'clown,' ... who could neither read nor write, thus came to be looked upon as the author of the works of Shakespeare! That appears to me an altogether unreasonable proposition. For myself, I think it reasonable to believe that Shakspeare of Stratford could write, and that he did write these...signatures which we have been considering."<sup>15</sup> And if Shakspeare had any connection with the theater and the production of plays (or if he were indeed the piratical play-broker Ben Jonson complains of in his "Poet-Ape" sonnet, as many believe), he would have had to have acquired some minimal reading skills.

But if illiteracy in this "rock-bottom" definition cannot be imputed to the Stratford citizen, neither can its opposite--with the connotation of "well-educated" or "cultured"--be gleaned from such appalling specimens of his penmanship that have come down to us. There is nothing in Dr. Harrison's report to contradict the skeptical view that Shakspeare was "unaccustomed to writing," as Prof. English says, or that he had not gained "extensive practice with the pen," for which, "there is little apparent evidence," as Harrison himself said in his 1977 letter cited earlier. According to this erstwhile document examiner for Scotland Yard, illness could account for the poor quality of all the signatures, not merely the laborious ones on the Will when he was near death. If so, the illness would have had to take place as early as 1612.

In addition, if illness is the true explanation, how are we to account for the disturbing fact that we have no handwriting samples when the signer was young and well? And, more importantly, why are there no provably certain specimens of Shakspeare's writing in any literary context? All of the signatures under discussion occur, it must be noted, on legal and property documents. This is all that is available to us after the most draconian paper-chase of three centuries' duration, which, if applied to one of Shakespeare's insignificant contemporaries, as Hugh Trevor-Roper tells us, "would be sufficient to produce a substantial biography."<sup>16</sup>

And though Dr. Harrison rightly warns the amateur handwriting analyst against inferring too much from alleged "dissimilarities" in character formation, the doubter of Shakspeare's credentials may be permitted raised eyebrows when two paleographers of impressive qualifications cannot agree on how the surname of signature #1 is spelled!<sup>17</sup> Or again, as mentioned above, scholars two centuries apart dispute whether an a occurs in the last name's second syllable of the best written Will signature, #6.

In sum, although Shakespeare scholars can claim that doubters have not proved Shakspeare incapable of writing the works attributed to him, there is absolutely nothing in these six signatures, the documents to which they are attached, nor the circumstances of their signing, to connect the Stratford grain vendor to the composition of any Shakespearean play or poem. The evidence of this handwriting, taken together with what the record so far tells us, supports the suspicion that Shakspeare did not put pen to paper any oftener than he absolutely had to--for his own legal and pecuniary well-being--and that Beeston's words (if he indeed uttered them) as cited by John Aubrey could well apply to Shakspeare's London days long before any hypothetical ailment beginning about 1612.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> John Aubrey, Brief Lives (collected in A. Wood, Athenae Oxonienses). Bodleian Library Aubrey MS 8, 1681.



- <sup>2</sup>When referring to the Stratford citizen, William Shakspeare--commonly supposed to be the author of the poems and plays of Shakespeare--the present writers spell the surname "Shakspeare," without an e in the first syllable and without an a in the second (the form he used, with occasional contractions, in his own signatures), whether he was or waa not the author. Conversely, when referring to the author of Shakespeare's works, the spelling of the name as it appeared on the vast number of contemporary publications is used: "Shakespeare" or "Shake-speare"--whether or not the author is the Stratford citizen. This distinction is made for clarification only and is not to be inferred as "evidence of authorship." When another writer is quoted (including the forensic handwriting analysts, Joseph English and Wilson Harrison), and the spelling "Shakespeare" is used in reference to the Stratford man, the present writers in order to conserve space have taken the liberty of substituting "Shakspeare" and enclosing this in brackets.
- <sup>3</sup>This numbering will be used throughout the article, and substituted for that of the forensic analysts Joseph English and Wilson Harrison, where our numbering will be enclosed in brackets. Although, as stated, the numbering is chronological, it will be seen from Dr. Harrison's report that he gives evidence for proposing that the last Will signature (#6) was actually written before the other two on this document (#4 and 5).
- <sup>4</sup>Modern texts give the reading "Shakspeare" (and occasionally, unwarrantably, "Shakespeare"), but Malone, examining this signature in a less decomposed state, says, "In the signature of his name subscribed to his Will certainly the letter a is not to be found in the second syllable... I suspect that what was formerly supposed to be the letter a over his autograph was only a coarse and broad mark of a contraction." (Cited in Greenwood, The Shakespeare Problem Restated, London, 1908, p. 18.)
- <sup>5</sup>Granville George Greenwood, Is There a Shakespeare Problem? London, 1916, p. 320.
- <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 322n.
- <sup>7</sup>Greenwood, The Shakspeare Signatures and "Sir Thomas More". London, 1924, p. viii.
- <sup>8</sup>Cited in Greenwood, Shakspeare's Handwriting. London, 1920, p. 20.
- <sup>9</sup>Letter to Gordon C. Cyr, December 5, 1977.
- <sup>10</sup>Letter to Gordon C. Cyr, August 1, 1979.
- <sup>11</sup>According to Dr. Harrison, the paper in the region of Signature #4 (the first page of the Will) "has decayed to such an extent that little remains of the original writing. It is unlikely that any treatment will ever reveal what is no longer apparent because the underlying paper has disappeared." However, he finds that this signature "displays no characteristics which suggest that originally it differed materially from the other two. Anyone examing this vestigial signature will realise what little meaning this phrase possesses."
- <sup>12</sup>Shakespeare's Handwriting. London, 1916, and Shakespeare's Hand in the Play of "Sir Thomas More"; Papers by Alfred W. Pollard, W. W. Greg, E. Maunde Thompson, J. Dover Wilson, and R. W. Chambers. Cambridge, 1923.
- <sup>13</sup>Problems in Shakspeare's Penmanship. New York, 1927, p. 182. [Emphasis ours.]
- <sup>14</sup>Shake-speare: Handwriting and Spelling. London, 1931, p. 12.
- <sup>15</sup>Is There a Shakespeare Problem? p. 332.



<sup>16</sup> Realités, November, 1962.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Edward Maunde Thompson reads the final letter in this much abbreviated signature as p (giving the curious reading "Shakp"), whereas Dr. C. W. Wallace (who discovered the Bellott-Mountjoy Deposition in the Public Record Office) gives the reading as "Shaks" --a more reasonable inference.

LATEST "SIR THOMAS MORE" FINDINGS POINT TO  
LORD OXFORD AS "SHAKESPEARE"

Shakespeare Oxford Society members who are daily readers of the public press will have noticed this summer a deluge of stories on Thomas Merriam's computerized word study of 'The Booke of of Sir Thomas More'--an anonymous Tudor manuscript play supposed by many to have a scene both composed by Shakespeare and in Shakspeare of Stratford's handwriting (or as Gwynneth M. Bowen wittily termed it, "written by Shakespeare--in both senses of both words"). Typical of the news items covering this momentous event was one from the New York Times of July 10 with the headline, "Computer Says Puzzling Play Was the Bard's," dispatched from London under the by-line of R. W. Apple, Jr.

"Using a technique developed by a team of researchers at the University of Edinburgh" says the item, "Mr. Merriam described earlier as a lecturer at Basingstoke Technical College near London; fed into the computer the texts of 'Sir Thomas More' and three plays by Shakespeare--'Pericles,' 'Julius Caesar' and 'Titus Andronicus.'" Comparing the "word habits" of the known and the unknown plays, "Mr. Merriam said he used 41 different tests. Some involved the frequency of the use of specific words; others involved the recurrence of such phrases as 'and that,' 'and so,' and the like."

Lo! What should come out of all this but Prof. Merriam's belief that the whole--and not just a tiny part, as had been guessed--of "Sir Thomas More" is a work by Shakespeare! "There is no evidence of a difference in authorship for the four plays," Merriam contends.

Well, far be it from us in the Shakespeare Oxford Society to intrude in the dispute that followed this bombshell, but dispute

there certainly has been. Into the fray leapt the irrepressible A. L. Rowse, broadcasting over National Public Radio's All Things Considered news show that Prof. Merriam's theory was "undoubted nonsense," and citing a host of literary scholars (whom he does not scruple to scorn as "English Lit. people" but now prays in aid when it suits his book to do so).

On more solid ground is Prof. Muriel Bradbrook of Cambridge University, cited in the New York Times story as saying that Mr. Merriam had erred in choosing 'Pericles' and 'Titus Andronicus' as controls, neither of which, she maintains, was certainly by Shakespeare. She also argued, "that the text of 'Julius Caesar' was probably corrupt. 'These are hardly the most authoritative plays on which to base a new theory,' the professor asserted."

It is possible, of course, that Mr. Merriam's findings may survive, especially if further tests are made with Shakespearean texts of good bibliographic provenance. (They will survive, I am certain, A. L. Rowse's sniping, which was founded on the feeble argument that most of the play is of inferior quality. But as Merriam himself said in rebuttal, "from mere mediocrity nothing can be inferred," and he challenged Dr. Rowse and other disputants to come up with a more reliable method of authorship detection than the one he used.)

Readers of the previous article may note that Dr. Wilson Harrison's report on Shakspeare's six signatures has dealt a knockout blow to the handwriting evidence used as a prop by those who contend only one "Sir Thomas More" scene is by Shakespeare. We must deal now with the remaining handwriting in this manuscript.

When Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, then Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum, first proposed his theory (enunciated in the opening paragraph of this article) in 1916, he succeeded in persuading many bibliographic scholars of the Shakespearean canon, such as Alfred Pollard, Walter Greg and others. Subsequently, Sir Edward, in collaboration with these scholars, found that there were six different hands involved in the "Sir Thomas More" manuscript. Most of the play was in one person's handwriting, which they labelled S, and identified as that of Anthony Munday. The five other handwritings were labelled A through E. Handwriting D is the three-page "Addition" Sir Edward believed to be in Shakspeare's handwriting (and which the scholars mentioned believed to be composed by the author of "Hamlet," etc.).

It is just here that Thomas Merriam, Sir E. Maunde Thompson, Pollard, Greg, et al. may have just delivered the Oxfordian hypothesis its long-awaited "smoking pistol." Scholars have a hard time explaining what Anthony Munday is doing writing a Shakespeare play. It is difficult enough to figure out, under the pre-Merriam hypothesis, what "Shakespeare" is doing writing a scene for one of Munday's plays! There is absolutely no evidence to connect Anthony Munday with anyone named "Shakespeare" or "Shakspeare," and any hypothetical relationship falters on the fact that the two men are supposed to have worked for rival companies. Merriam is simply whistling in the dark when he says, in another news item on this subject, "they collaborated in that year and that year only." But this is the whole problem with "Shakespearean biography" in general: Shakspeare's literary connections with anybody cannot be documented, only inferred--and the inferences made in this instance, whether by Merriam or anyone else, are highly dubious, owing to the theatrical associations mentioned.

But Anthony Munday's own literary connections are quite visible. We can easily place him in this theatrical milieu. And where do we find him? Why, in the service of that very 17th Earl of Oxford, who,

scholars try to tell us, cannot possibly be the Shakespeare of the world's adulation, because, they say, there is "no evidence." But here we have ironclad evidence for Oxford's employment of Munday: it exists in numerous dedications by the latter to the former, to his son, Henry the 18th earl, and to his son-in-law, Phillip Herbert (one of the "Incomparable Paire of Brethren" to whom the 1623 First Folio is dedicated). In several of these dedications, Munday describes himself as "servant" to the 17th earl. Between the lines of these common-form flatteries, Munday's patron appears as a literary figure of high stature, wide culture, and one highly supportive of other writers' work.

How, then, to account for Munday's handwriting in this aborted production, if this is entirely a Shakespearean play? Quite simple. Anthony Munday was the chief among many lesser transcribers, whose hands appear in the various "Additions," one of which has been assigned--on the most gossamer of assumptions, as we have seen--to "William Shakespeare," by whom is meant the Stratford Shakspeare, who else? (See preceding article for Canon Rendall's cogent argument for Hand D's being that of a transcriber.) These scribes were probably all working for Oxford in the 1580's and 90's, when he had received an annual 1,000-pound grant from the Crown (for services deliberately unspecified) which could well have been for the writing of stage propaganda (in the form of chronicle plays) during Queen Elizabeth's ongoing war with Spain.

So Prof. Merriam's findings, as we said, may or may not prove out. But if this is indeed a Shakespearean play we are talking about (or even if only a portion can be proved as Shakespeare's), and if the bulk of the play's handwriting is indeed that of Anthony Munday, well-documented as a longtime servant to the playwrighting Earl of Oxford, the scholarly world is now confronted with the best evidence so far of Edward de Vere's intimate connection with the works of "William Shakespeare." We gladly invite our Stratfordian colleagues to come up with a more reasonable explanation.

--Gordon C. Cyr

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# SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY MEMBERS IN ACTION

PHILIP S. WELD won both national and international recognition this summer when his ocean-racing trimaran "Ms. Moxie" swooped over the Newport, Rhode Island finish line June 25th in 17 days, 23 hours and 12 minutes after leaving Plymouth, England--breaking the previous record by almost three days. Weld is the first American to win the grand prize of solo sailing in the Observer Single-Handed Transatlantic Race (OSTAR).

A recording of two musical compositions by GORDON C. CYR, S.O.S. Executive Vice-President, has just been released on the Orion label: Tabb Songs (1975) for soprano and piano, and Tetramusic (1977) for clarinet, cello, piano and four percussion. The Orion album (#ORS 80374) also contains music by fellow Maryland composers Lawrence Moss and Mark Wilson and is co-sponsored by the Maryland State Arts Council.

IN OUR FALL NEWSLETTER: Articles by Philadelphia members BRONSON FELDMAN and WARREN HOPE. (The Newsletter's editorship will be resumed by its regular editor, CHARLTON OGBURN, JR.)

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## FUTURE OF CASTLE HEDINGHAM IN DOUBT

We have received from Vice-Admiral Sir Ian McGeoch, K.C.B., D.S.O., D.S.C., portentous news about Castle Hedingham, seat of the de Veres from the time it was built in about 1130 and birthplace of Edward, 17th Earl of Oxford. Sir Ian, a convinced Oxfordian and himself a resident of the village of Castle Hedingham, writes as follows, under date of January 24th:

"Yesterday, at about noon, Miss Musette Majendie, who owned Hedingham Castle, died, after months of illness from which she suffered increasing pain, but never a word of self-pity did she utter. She does not seem to have any immediate heir, and her affairs are being handled by her London solicitor, and the companion who has, for the past seven or eight years, been the active manager and 'chief staff officer' at the Castle--Mrs. Joyce Westmoreland.

"Surviving Musette Majendie is her lifelong and boon companion, Dr. Marjorie Blackie. These two, by some legal arrangement, became 'sisters.' No doubt Dr. Blackie, who for many years attended our Royal Family and was awarded on her retirement the Companion of the Victorian Order (CVO), is the immediate 'heir' to the Castle. But unfortunately she herself had a stroke last year, from which she has never fully recovered; her mind does not function.

"You may gather that, apart from the sense of grief occasioned by my affection for Miss Majendie and Dr. Blackie, I am deeply concerned about the future of the Castle. The British public has not, so far, shown any disposition to challenge Shakespearean orthodoxy. It may be that some action should be considered by Oxfordians in order to preserve Hedingham in trust, as the birthplace of Shakespeare--the English-speaking world must surely unite in establishing the truth about de Vere/Shakespeare, and I can imagine nothing more likely to bring this about than the purchase of Hedingham Castle by a Foundation dedicated to this purpose . . . . 'There is a tide . . . .'"

Naturally we subscribe wholeheartedly to Sir Ian's view as to the necessity of preserving the Norman keep (all that has remained of the Castle since the 16th Century) as a shrine that must come to be recognized as the most important in the English-speaking world commemorative of a single person. We hope to have something to say in a later issue respecting modalities. Meanwhile we should be glad to receive any suggestions from members.

Editor

Delia Bacon, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and  
The Shakespeare Authorship Question

by  
 Warren Hope

I

On the day Queen Victoria blew out the thirty-three candles on her birthday cake, Delia Bacon, a tall and not unattractive American woman of Puritan stock, stepped off the steamer Pacific at Liverpool. She was determined to find evidence in support of her hypothesis that William Shakspeare of Stratford-on-Avon, a man she contemptuously referred to as "the old Player," could not have been the author of the philosophic wealth and have exhibited the deep learning and rich culture she found in the works of Shakespeare and, further, that he was in fact a mask behind which a circle of courtiers were the actual authors of the works. Armed with letters of introduction signed by a sympathetic admirer of her work, Ralph Waldo Emerson, she was also determined to launch an assault on literary London, seeking converts to her cause.

Less than a month after her arrival, she was established in London and, on June 8, 1853, turned her intellectual artillery upon Thomas Carlyle. Her letter to her sister which describes this meeting shows that Delia Bacon was a zealot with a sense of humor; and good sense as well.

"My visit to Mr. Carlyle was very rich. I wish you could have heard him laugh. Once or twice I thought he would have taken the roof of the house off. At first they were perfectly stunned--he and the gentleman he had invited to meet me. They turned black in the face of my presumption. 'Do you mean to say,' so and so, said Mr. Carlyle, with his strong emphasis; and I said that I did; and they both looked at me with staring eyes, speechless for want of words in which to convey their sense of my audacity. At length Mr. Carlyle came down on me with a volley. I did not mind it the least. I told him he did not know what was in the Plays if he said that, and no one could know who believed that booby wrote them. It was then that he began to shriek. You could have heard him a mile. I told him too that I should not think of questioning his authority in such a case if it were not with me a matter of knowledge. I did not advance it as an opinion. They began to be a little moved with my coolness at length, and before the meeting was over they agreed to hold themselves in a state of readiness to receive what I had to say on the subject.

. . . . "

Miss Bacon began to write up her theory and arguments and to continue to pester London's literary lights with her heretical outbursts. Some, like Carlyle, were kind; none took her seriously.

In America, Emerson acted as a voluntary literary agent for her, trying to place pieces of her work in periodicals while simultaneously endeavoring to interest book publishers in her work. Though Carlyle wrote Emerson that he pitied Miss Bacon her quixotic mission and worried over what bringing out appeared to him her deplorable unwillingness to search for documentary proofs, he also tried to interest English editors and publishers in her presentation of the Shakespeare authorship question. No one acted on these suggestions on either side of the Atlantic.

Disheartened, Delia Bacon gradually immersed herself in her work and visited people very rarely. Her funds, which had been provided by Charles Butler, a wealthy New Yorker who had been impressed by the force of her historical lectures, and which were intended to finance several months of research and her return fare to America, dwindled. But she could not bring herself to leave England where, she felt sure, she could find proof of her theory.

It was not until November, 1855, more than two and one-half years after her arrival in England, that she received word that some of her work would appear in print. Through Emerson's efforts, her "William Shakespeare and His Plays: An Inquiry Concerning Them" appeared as the leading article in Putnam's Monthly for January, 1856, along with this editorial note:

In commencing the publication of these bold, original, and most ingenious and interesting speculations upon the real authorship of Shakespeare's plays, it is proper for the editor of Putnam's Monthly in disclaiming all responsibility for their startling view of the question, to say that they are the result of long and conscientious investigation on the part of the learned and eloquent scholar, their author; and that the editor has reason to hope that they will continue through some future number of the magazine.

The author also had reason to hope so too, [that the articles would continue in future numbers of the magazine]. She had been requested to send more installments immediately; and she depended on the magazine's payments for her livelihood. (Her family refused to finance what they thought folly, if not madness, on her part.)

But Putnam's editor did not find her lengthy restatements of basic points suitable for magazine publication; Emerson suggested she had best wait for book publication if she could not advance her argument more rapidly and tersely. The manuscripts she had sent to America, of which she had no copies, were lost in transit between the offices of Putnam's Monthly and Emerson in Concord.

## II.

Discouraged, alone and destitute in a foreign country. Delia Bacon wrote to Nathaniel Hawthorne, then American consul in Liverpool, for advice, on May 8, 1856. Four days later, Hawthorne replied:

Dear Miss Bacon, --It was quite unnecessary to send me these introductory letters (which I enclose) for I have long entertained a high respect for your character, and an interest in your object, so far as I understood it. To be sure, I know very little about it, not having seen the article [sic] in "Putnam", nor heard anything but some vague talk from Miss Peabody [Hawthorne's sister-in-law and a friend of Emerson's through whom Emerson had tried to interest Hawthorne in the Shakespeare question as early as March, 1853], three years ago. Neither do I think myself a very fit person to comprehend the matter, nor to advise you in it; especially now, when I am bothered and bored, and harrassed and torn in pieces, by a thousand items of daily business, and benumbed as to that part of my mind to which your work would appeal, and depressed by domestic anxieties. I say this, however, by no means to excuse myself from the endeavor to be of service to you in any way and every manner, but only to suggest reasons why I shall probably be useless as a critic and a judge. If you really think that I can promote your object, tell me definitely how, and try me; and if I can say a true word to yourself about the work, it shall certainly be said; or if I can aid, personally, or through any connections in London, in bringing the book before the public, it shall be done . . . .

Hawthorne was as good as his word. In July, he conversationally introduced Elizabeth Barrett Browning to Delia Bacon's views, and, when in London, went to visit Miss Bacon. After this visit, which made her sad plight clear to him, he wrote to her frequently. He became the only sympathetic contact she had in the world; he notified her creditors that he would be personally responsible for her debts, he sent her money, he wrote her family in an attempt to persuade them to support her, and he set out to find a publisher for her book.

This last, he soon learned, was no easy task--even for an author of Hawthorne's stature. Eventually, the book was produced at his expense. He had enough sheets printed to provide an American as well as an English edition. He sent the sheets to his own publishers, Ticknor & Field of Boston, who had rejected the work, so that the book would appear under their imprint, without troubling to consult them in advance. They issued the book anyway.

If Hawthorne staked his money to guarantee the book would appear, he staked his reputation on a sympathetic if restrained Preface. He wrote for it in an attempt to guarantee it a hearing. He declared that his purpose was to place "my countrywoman upon a point of amicable understanding with the public. She has a vast preliminary difficulty to encounter. The first feeling of every reader must be one of absolute repugnance toward a person who seeks to tear out of the Anglo-Saxon heart the name which for ages it has held dearest, and to substitute another name, or names, to which the settled belief of the world has long assigned a very different position."

Despite his generosity and sympathy, Hawthorne was unable to maintain an amicable understanding even between himself and Delia Bacon. She raged

against him because he did not publicly state that he wholeheartedly shared her views; he could not do so because he did not share them. His correspondence from this period and his chapter on Delia Bacon, "A Remarkable Woman," which appeared in a version of his English notebooks, Our Old Home, make clear that his faith in the traditional authorship was never totally dispelled.

Delia Bacon went insane, living in Stratford-on-Avon, where she pored over the letters of Francis Bacon and haunted the Church, worrying over whether she should open Shakspeare's grave in an attempt to locate evidence which would shed light on the authorship of the plays. Eventually, a nephew of hers appeared in England and took her home, where she died on September 2, 1859.

Her work represents the first attempt to make the Shakespeare authorship question a serious cultural riddle, the solution of which would have a fundamental impact on our understanding of the past. In addition, it opened the minds of leading American literary figures--Emerson, Hawthorne, Whitman, Mark Twain, and Henry James--to the discrepancies between the Stratford man and the works of Shakespeare and three of these became public scoffers of what might be called the cult of the butcher boy. Hawthorne's view was most clearly stated in his Preface to Delia Bacon's The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded:

... after listening to the author's interpretation of the Plays, and seeing how wide a scope she assigns to them, how high a purpose, and what riches of inner meaning, the thoughtful reader will hardly return again--not wholly, at all events--to the common view of them and of their author . . . .

Perhaps even more important, though, is the reaction Hawthorne had to the reception the book received:

... A few persons turned over one or two leaves, as it lay there, and essayed to kick the volume deeper into mud; for they were the hack critics



of the minor periodical press in London, than who, I suppose, though doubtless excellent fellows in their way, there are no gentlemen in the world less sensible of any sanctity in a book, or less likely to recognize an author's heart in it, or more utterly careless about bruising, if they do recognize it. It is their trade. They could not do otherwise. I never thought of blaming them. It was not for such Englishmen as one of these to get beyond the idea that an assault was medicated on England's greatest poet. From the scholars and critics of her own country, indeed, Miss Bacon might have looked for a worthier appreciation, because many of the best of them have higher cultivation, and finer and deeper literary sensibilities, than all but the very profoundest and brightest Englishmen. But they are not a courageous body of men; they dare not think a truth that has an odor of absurdity, lest they should feel themselves bound to speak it out. If an American ever wrote a word in her behalf, Miss Bacon never knew it, nor did I. Our journalists at once republished some of the most brutal vituperations of the English press, thus pelting their poor countrywoman with stolen mud, without even waiting to know whether the ignominy was deserved. And they have never known it, to this day, and never will ...

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Note: In addition to the references mentioned in the text, some of the material presented here is drawn from Theodore Bacon's Delia Bacon: A Biographical Sketch (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company), 1888 and James T. Fields's Yesterdays With Authors (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company), 1896. Dr. Bronson Feldman first drew my attention to Hawthorne's interest in the Shakespeare authorship question and has talked with me about it on several occasions.

## A CRACK IN THE DIKE AT B.B.C.

From the Society's less-than-secret agent in Essex--the de Vere country,--Harold W. Patience, of Braintree, we have received the following report dated January 21st:

"A recent extraordinary development on B.B.C. Television merits a special report.

"At some time prior to screening of a Shakespeare play [in the current series referred to by a British actor as the Bardathon] it is the custom of the B.B.C. Television to present a short program entitled Shakespeare in Perspective in which an 'expert' gives an outline of the particular play and offers his viewpoint.

"In the case of All's Well it appears that the venue of the 'Perspective' piece--Burghley House--was chosen because somebody decided that the character of Lafeu was based on Lord Burghley [an identification in which we concur]!

"Also Barry Took [who gave the Perspective] noticed (or somebody noticed for him) that All's Well seems to be based on episodes from the private life of the Earl of Oxford. Oxford's name was mentioned several times in this "Perspective." As was to be expected, however, there was no outright statement as regards the authorship problem.

"They suddenly switched the scene to what appeared to be either a large London theatrical customer or the actual B.B.C. Television costume storage premises. Barry Took put on Elizabeth costume and a fancy plumed hat--and suddenly remarked, 'The Earl of Oxford really dressed. He was known as the Italianate Englishman.' ...

"But the astonishing climax (for an Oxfordian) came when he was talking about the 'bed trick' in All's Well.



He suddenly remarked, 'I have a book here which describes an identical episode in the life of the Earl of Oxford.' He then read the relative passage from the book which was, of course, Wright's History of Essex."

It was J. Thomas Looney who discovered a passage in The Histories of Essex of 1836, by Morant and Wright, concerning the rupture between the Earl and Countess of Oxford which read:

"He forsook his lady's bed, [but] the father of Lady Anne by stratagem, contrived that her husband should unknowingly sleep with her, believing her to be another woman, and she bore a son to him in consequence of this meeting."

Editor

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#### WHAT JOHN AUBREY SAID

Two Stratfordian professors have taken issue with Gordon C. Cyr's interpretation in the last issue of the newsletter of John Aubrey's note about Shakspeare, that "if invited to writ; he was in paine." It naturally goes hard with orthodoxy to have it reported that their "Shakespeare" was so unaccustomed to wielding a pen that when invited to do so he had to find an excuse for declining. The full quotation from Aubrey is as follows:

the more to be admired q[ui]a he was  
not a company keeper  
lived in Shoreditch, wouldnt be debauched,  
& if invited to writ=he was in paine.

Sir E. K. Chambers represents the punctuation mark after "writ" with a semi-colon. It was objected by the two professors that Dr. Cyr had followed his example and should instead have used a colon. Whichever mark may be employed, it seems evident that what Aubrey was saying was that "if invited to write, he was in paine." The professoriate has, of course,--really of necessity--found an alternative reading. This requires some

doctoring of the original. As James G. McManaway, former curator of the Folger Library, has it, what Aubrey wrote was (the bracketed words being Dr. Manaway's):

the more to be admired quia [because] he was not a company keeper; lived in Shoreditch; wouldn't be debauched. And if invited to, wrote [that] he was in pain.

Most orthodox writers content themselves with merely adding that comma after "invited to," which is absent in the original text. The effect is the same. The meaning becomes "and if invited to [be debauched], he was in paine."

Quite apart from the morality of quietly slipping a comma into what Aubrey wrote, the altered text requires a radical revision of one's conception of Elizabethan tavern life. We must believe it to have been so structured as to call for written invitations to be debauched, with written responses thus being required. We do not believe it.

Another thing. People have been begging off from unwanted invitations from time immemorial. The usual excuse is a previous engagement. Was Shakspeare never simply otherwise committed, could he never plead the ferocious pace of writing he would have had to maintain to have been Shakespeare the poet-dramatist, not to mention the busy actor and theatrical manager? On the other hand, as a reason for not wielding a pen when occasion arose, only one excuse would seem to be possible: the man invited to do so would have had to have his writing hand incapacitated--and how, unless he was to go around with it bandaged, except by pain?

However awkward for orthodoxy, what Aubrey was surely saying was that Shakspeare was too uncertain a penman to let his work be seen.

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### SOL FEINSTONE

The delay occasioned us in bringing out this newsletter has made us late in reporting an event we should far rather not have to report at all: the death of Sol Feinstein in October.

Sol, as he preferred to be called in these columns, was over ninety (how much was never clear) but we wish fervently that he could have lived at least a little longer to see the achievement of one of the goals he had set down as objectives he hoped would be gained before he died: the general recognition of the 17th Earl of Oxford as Shakespeare. To that end, as we are much aware, he made an extremely generous contribution to the Society, enabling Ruth Loyd and Judge Minos D. Miller to pursue their research into original Elizabethan documents in England.

Sol had become acquainted with and addicted to Shakespeare through the Yiddish Theatre in New York. Many years later he became convinced that Shakespeare was Oxford by the force of the evidence and logic marshaled by J. Thomas Looney in "'Shakespeare' Identified."

Having arrived in this country as a penniless youth from Lithuania, Sol never forgot his early circumstances or the opportunity he found here to achieve the great success in finance that was ultimately his. He became a keen student and celebrant of the American Revolution. This was attested by, among other things, his beguiling book "Courage and Candlelight: the Feminine Spirit of '76" and by his collection of Revolutionary War memorabilia, said to be surpassed only by that in the Library of Congress. Apart from a most valuable collection of George Washington's letters, which he characteristically presented to Mount Vernon, this collection is largely housed in the David Library of the American Revolution, next to his Revolutionary-period house at Washington Crossing, on the Delaware in Pennsylvania. The present director of the Library is Sol's son, the distinguished representative of the American theatre, Ezra Stone.

Sol amassed a great deal of money--and gave it away. However, we shall not attempt a catalogue of his good works. Those fortunate enough to have visited Sol and his lovely and lovable wife Rose know that they lived simply, in accordance with the injunction set forth on the letterhead of the David Library under the heading "A Nonagenarian's Advice for the Survival of Freedom: It is animal indulgence to live in luxury while millions, some in our own country, lack for bread." The first advice comes in a precept of George Washington's: "To have peace ... always be prepared for war." In an upper corner of our copy of the brief admonition there is written in the somewhat shaky writing of his final year, "My last project on earth."

For Oxford's sake and for a friend's, would it have proved not to be so.

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#### Membership Dues

Note: With this issue, the editorship of the Newsletter will pass from Charlton Ogburn to Warren Hope

Student Member	\$2.00 per annum
Regular Member	\$10.00 per annum
Donating Member	\$25.00 per annum (or more)

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