



THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTERS

1995



Excerpts from the "Failure of Conventional Biography"
in THE MYSTERIOUS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: THE MYTH AND THE REALITY
(EPM 2nd Ed. 1992 4th Printing) by Charlton Ogburn

"Reviewing in the New York Times a book by the late Alfred Harbage of Harvard whom he called 'the foremost American Shakespeare scholar,' Oscar James Campbell of Columbia made a telling point. 'Harbage rejects any direct relationship between the poet's work and his life...' He 'believes, for example, that it detracts from the beauty and artistic significance of the sonnets to read them as a record of the dramatists's wayward love life. In thus eliminating all that is personal from the poet's art, Harbage risks reducing Shakespeare's image to that of no man.'" (Underlining added.)

"Given no relationship between the poet's work and Shakespeare's life, a no-man is what we inevitably find in conventional biographies. Emrys Jones says in his The Origins of Shakespeare (London Oxford University Press, 1977), 'Biographies of Shakespeare all suffer from one serious defect. They are all lives which leave 'Shakespeare' out. What is always missing is what matters most, his mind. These lives have a void at the center which leaves the reader finally more perplexed than enlightened.'".....

"Marchette Chute's highly successful contribution (Shakespeare of London) deserves praise. She brings admirably to life, in rich detail, the theatrical world that Shakespeare would have known. But her success in this makes only more conspicuous the 'void at the center' where Shakespeare should be. The subject of the biography is a puppet, obedient to the strings but without life of its own. Her Shakespeare of London could better have been called London of Shakespeare."

"In 1980, the Folger Library sent forth upon a prolonged tour around the country a much-applauded exhibition of Elizabethiana under the title of 'Shakespeare: The Globe and the World', accompanied by a catalogue with text by Samuel Schoenbaum, also highly publicized...And what did the exhibition tell us about Shakespeare? That he ranks, John Russell puts it in the New York Times,

'just a notch or two below Homer...among the big men who got clear away. It was so at the time when people first began to wonder what he was like. Several hundred years later, the position has not changed at all...

At the time of the quartercentury of Shakespeare's birth in 1964, all this was almost painfully evident. Fat biographies were thrust upon us, but they told us only what we knew already - that beyond three or four facts that were beaten into us in school, all is surmise. Behind the standard grammatical formulas - he 'could have', he 'might have' and he 'probably did' - a huge emptiness lurks.'" (Underlining added.)....

"George B. Harrison of the University of Michigan, himself a biographer of Shakespeare, addresses the problem with unexpected frankness. He writes: 'Readers often complain that there is no good biography of Shakespeare. There never can be...There are the plays in which again and again Shakespeare used his experience but nothing shows where and how he came by them.'" (Underlining added.)

"Do (Stratfordian biographers) ever seriously ask themselves why 'Shakespeare' should cause his biographers greater problems than any other writer back to Homer, lost in what are called the mists of antiquity? Do they not find it odd, the Oxford historian Hugh R. Trevor-Roper remarks, that 'Of all the immortal geniuses of literature, none is personally so elusive as William Shakespeare?'"....

"Frank Harris protested, back in 1911, that 'Without a single exception the commentators have missed the man and the story; they have turned the poet into the commonplace record of a successful tradesman's career.'"....

"Professor Edward Quinn of New York University puts his finger on it when he wrote that 'The more one looks at the facts of his life, the more one becomes convinced that they have very little to do with his plays.' Certainly it is true that the facts of Shakespeare's life have very little to do with Shakespeare's plays."

"Calling Hamlet 'the first great tragedy Europe has produced in 2000 years', Frank Kermode of University College, London, says in the new Riverside Shakespeare, 'How Shakespeare came to write, it is, of course, a mystery on which it is useless to speculate.'"....

"Orthodoxy throws up its hands helplessly over the most important and elementary questions to be asked about Shakespeare. At the same time it slams the door angrily on those who offer, in place of their Shakespeare, one with whom the answers to those questions come readily and Hamlet and Love's Labour's Lost are natural outgrowths. To Gwynne Blakemore Evans of Harvard, chief architect of the Riverside Shakespeare, those who presume to do so constitute a 'small...band of zealots,' to Professor Sampson of the Cambridge History 'a succession of cranks representing the extreme of ignorant credulity and morbid ingenuity.'"....

"If authorities from the two Cambridges are at loss to answer crucial questions about the authorship, it should come as less of a surprise to learn, extraordinary as it still may seem, that Levi Fox, director of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, refused to be interviewed on the subject by the British Broadcasting Company and the press. Queried about this disinclination, Professor Louis Marder said, 'My opinion of Mr. Fox is that he is so sure of his position, and knows so well that proper evidence is available that he does not trouble himself to answer.' Others may come to a different conclusion."

* * * * *

WITS RECREATION (1640) published this anonymous epigram:

To Mr. William Shake-speare
Shake-speare we must be silent in thy praise,
'Cause our encomions will blast thy bays
Which envy could not, that thou didst so well;
Let thine own histories prove thy Chronicle.

An author who wants to forever conceal his name with a pseudonym to all but those who will be silent and not reveal it. This is exactly why Oxfordians are convinced that Edward deVere adopted William Shakespeare as a pseudonym.

Charlton Ogburn also points out that "Let thine own histories prove thy Chronicle..." Mr. Looney and his followers have found between the content of Shakespeare's plays and Edward deVere's life.

For that reason not one of the Stratfordian biographers, such as Schoenbaum, Adams, Chute, Levi, Sidney Lee, Giroux, Matus and many others, print that epigram in their books.

England's Helicon

1600, 1614

EDITED BY
HYDER EDWARD ROLLINS

VOLUME II



CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1935

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SHIPWRECK IN THE WATERS OF ORTHODOXY

by Randall Barron

England's Helicon is a famous miscellaneous collection of poems, of which two editions were published, in 1600 and 1614.

I decided to have a look at it myself just to see what I might find as to the Shakespeare authorship question. On a library interchange request, I received the books.

One of the first things I did, of course, was to look up the name of Edward de Vere in the index.

And...

That almost knocked me out. Caused me a sleepless night.

Because...

Because this is what I found.

Vere, Edward de, seventeenth earl of Oxford
(E.O., L. Ox., alias Shakespeare)...

After recovering, partially, from that, I tried to figure out where that had come from, what it meant.

This edition of England's Helicon was edited by Hyder Edward Rollins, was printed at Cambridge, Massachusetts by the Harvard University Press in 1935.

Therefore, I presume the notation beside the name of Edward de Vere was made by Mr. Rollins, the editor.

What is not explained is why.

Because what it seems to be saying is nothing less than this. That "Shakespeare" was a pen name for the Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere.

I should note here for those who wish to see this for themselves, it occurs on page 239 of Volume 2.

But would not this be reason to write another volume? If all the works of Shakespeare were really penned by Edward de Vere?

Oxfordians believe that, true.

But this is an editor who, as far as I know, is not an Oxfordian. An editor who otherwise, as far as I can find to date, makes no further comment along those lines.

Yet there it is.

So where did he get his information? Was he a closet reader of John Thomas Looney? Did he really believe that Shakespeare was de Vere and vice versa?

I don't know. As far as I can determine, there is no other follow up comment nor explanation in either Volume 1 or 2.

Put another way, if he did not believe it, why would he put it in?

Did he have some other, earlier source of information predating Looney?

The obvious way to find out would be to ask Mr. Rollins. Would he still be alive? If he was, say, forty, when he edited England's Helicon in 1935, he would be about one hundred years old today. Not impossible, and maybe he was younger. Of course, he may have been older.

I leave it to Shakespeare Oxford Society members in the area of Massachusetts to investigate this, if they wish. Finding Mr. Rollins' descendants and questioning them, should they happen to be interested, and to know...

Could be an interesting byway or sidelight. How a conventional editor of Elizabethan poetry could, in the most casual manner, insert a little two word note.

A little two word note that by its content, if proved, could shatter the central icon of the Western Literary World. And restore the true author to his rightful place.

* * * * *

The program committee for the meeting of the Shakespeare-Oxford Society on September 29 is asking for papers, or excerpts of papers, for possible presentation at the meeting. The subjects should be directly relevant to the authorship question. The papers should be prepared with oral delivery in mind and should not exceed 30 minutes in length. Please submit by June 1, 1995 to:

Isabel A. Holden
87 Round Hill Road
Northhampton, MA 01060

The Way to Avoid the Ill-Suited is to Keep it from Being Communicated

In his SHAKESPEARE'S LIVES (1970) Professor S. Schoenbaum quoted on pages 5 and 6 the first eulogy to William Shakespeare which was inscribed on the Stratford Monument in the Trinity Church in Stratford-on-Avon:

"JUDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATES, ARTE MARONEM:
TERRA TEGIT, POPULUS MAERET, OLYMPUS HABET.
STAY PASSENGER, WHY GOEST THOU BY SO FAST?
READ, IF THOU CANST, WHOM DOES ENVIOUS DEATH HATH PLACED,
WITHIN THIS MONUMENT: SHAKESPEARE, WITH WHOM
QUICK NATURE DIED: WHOSE NAME DOTH DECK HIS TOMB,
FAR MORE THAN COST; SITH ALL THAT HE HATH WRIT
LEAVES LIVING ART BUT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WIT.

OBIT ANNO DOMINI 1616
AETATIS 53 DIE 23 APR.

Whoever wrote these lines has little to tell us. What can we expect of a eulogist so poorly informed as not even to know that his subject rests under the floor rather than in the wall? Our attention focuses not on the epitaph, not for that matter on the monument as a whole, instead we concentrate our gaze on the sepulchral statue."

Professor S. Schoenbaum deleted the above from his SHAKESPEARE'S LIVES (Revised 1991).

In his SHAKESPEARE'S LIVES (1970) Professor Schoenbaum wrote on page 9 that "Digges prophesies, with no excess of daring, that the dramatist's writing will outlast his tomb:

When that stone is rent,
And time dissolveth thy Stratford monument,
Here we alive shall view thee still."

Professor S. Schoenbaum also deleted the above from his SHAKESPEARE'S LIVES (Revised 1991).

It is conceivable that Professor S. Schoenbaum intended to divert Shakespearean biographers from deciphering the Stratford Monument and its inscription for the following reasons revealed by Richard F. Whalen in his SHAKESPEARE WHO WAS HE? (Praeger 1994):

Millions of tourists have gazed up at the monument on the wall of Trinity Church in Stratford-on-Avon. It seems to be an authentic memorial to Shakespeare the poet/dramatist. Upon closer examination, however, the effigy and the inscription are not what they seem to be.

The inscription on the monument, which was probably erected some times in the seven years between Will. Shakspeare's death and publication of the First Folio, is not what might be expected if it were intended to pay tribute to one of the better known poets and dramatists of the times. His full name does not appear, only Shakespeare, which is a Stratford variant spelling and not that of the famous author of London. Without a first name, it does not distinguish the deceased from the many other Shakspeare's in the parish. The name is buried in the middle of the cryptic, eight line epitaph.

The text of the epitaph is banal and even contradictory. Most significant, nowhere are the plays or poems mentioned. No quotation from Shakespeare is used, nor is Will Shakspeare praised as the author of them. Any word of tribute to a renowned dramatist is missing, as is any word about the theater or acting.

Whoever composed the epitaph exhorts passersby to slow down and "read if you can" (a bizarre exhortation) who was placed within the monument on the wall, but Will Shakspeare's body was placed under the tombstone in the church floor. The remaining three lines refer to "quick nature" having diad with him, since all he has writtan "leaves living art, but page, to serve his wit." Certainly not high praise, and not a word about poetry or plays or the theater. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the epitaph writer could not or would not write a proper tribute to the famous poet/dramatist.

The effigy itself is of doubtful authenticity, in today's monument it is a half-length bust of a man with an upturned moustache and goatee. He holds a large quill pen in one hand and a sheet of paper in the other. For some reason both hands rest on what quite clearly represents a pillow. This effigy, however, is almost certainly not what was originally erected in the church. An early engraving of it shows a man with a drooping moustache clutching what appears to be a sack of wool or grain, and Will Shakspeare was a grain dealer. There is no pen or paper in the engraving which was published forty yaars after his death and again seventy-five years later. A similar engraving was used by the first Shakespearean editor and biographer, Nicholas Rowe, in his 1709 edition of the plays, and it was still without pen or paper.

The transformation of the effigy from grain dealer to writer apparently occurred a century or more after Will Shakspeare's death. In the 1700s and again in the mid-1800s the bust was reportedly repaired and "beautified". Today the effigy, equipped with pen and paper and preparing to write on a pillow, gazes out over the heads of visitors to the church. That is not, however, the effigy that Will Shakspeare's survivors and friends saw as a memorial to him.

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OXFORDIAN PROFESSORS TAKE THE ISSUE TO COLLEGE CLASSES; PROF. LONDRE CHOSEN TO GIVE 'DISTINGUISHED LECTURE'

Students on college campuses are beginning to hear about the excellent case that can be made for Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, as the true author of Shakespeare's works.

Today, very few college students, if any, hear about the case for Oxford in thair classas. Or if they do, the professors simply dismiss the claims without examination. Now that may be changing. To be sure, it's only a beginning, but excellent beginnings bode well for the future.

At Marquette University, Dr. Felicia Hardison Londre, a society member, is incorporating the Oxfordian proposition in her classes. Professor Londre, curators' professor of theatre and drama at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, was awarded the Women's Chair in Humanistic Studies for the 1994-95 school year at Marquette. As one of the textbooks for her course she assigned Richard Whalen's Shakespeare: Who Was He?

Professor Londre, author of five books and more than 40 articles on the theater, has presented the case for Oxford on a number of prestigious platforms. At Marquette she was also selected to deliver the Eleanor H. Bohem Distinguished Lecture. Her title for the public lecture: "The Questionable Identity of Shakespeare: Who Really Authored the Works We All Know?"

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, Dr. Anne E. Pluto, a society member, has also incorporated the authorship question into her literature courses at Lesley College. She, too, has assigned Whalen's book for her students.

In addition, Professor Pluto will lead a panel discussion on the authorship question at a meeting of the Northeast Modern Language Association conference in Boston at the end of March. This is believed to be the first time there has been an Oxfordian panel discussion at an MLA conference.

At Fitchburg, MA State College, society member Grace Cali of Shirley, Massachusetts, an adjunct professor, will conduct a continuing education class this Spring specifically on the authorship question and the evidence for Oxford.

With these excellent beginnings, perhaps Shakespeare professors on other campuses will see the value of challenging college students to evaluate the evidence for Oxford as the true author.

* * * * *

The New York Times Obituaries, Saturday Feb. 4, 1995

PRESTON FLEET, 60, CREATOR OF FOTOMAT AND OMNIMAX, DIES

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Feb. 3 (AP)—Preston Fleet, who founded Fotomat, the photo-developing company, and invented a film projection technique in which the theater audience is surrounded by giant images, died on Tuesday at a Santa Barbara hospital. He was 60 and lived in nearby Santa Maria.

The cause was cancer, the hospital said.

Mr. Fleet's business career began in 1968 when he founded Fotomat, a drive-through picture-developing company with trademark kiosks. The business grew to 1800 sites in the first year and half. The company has been owned by the Konica Corporation of Japan since 1986.

In 1973, he helped found the Reuben H. Fleet Space Theater and Space Museum in San Diego, where he lived until about 10 years ago. He outfitted it with a system of projection, called Omnimax, that surrounds the audience with sound and pictures.

The projectors, which bounce images off giant, tilted-domed screens, have been

installed in more than 100 theaters around the world by their Canadian manufacturer, Imax.

He helped create "Chronos", a film made with time-lapse photography that won an award in 1987 at the first international festival of large format films.

Mr. Fleet was also an aviator, an expert on theater organs and wrote a book, "True and Cry, Unraveling the Shakespeare Myth", contending that Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him. He contended that Edward de Vere was the author.

Born in Buffalo, he moved to San Diego when his father, Reuben Fleet, relocated the Consolidated Aircraft Company.

Mr. Fleet is survived by his wife, Beth; two sons, Alex and Justin, both of Encinitas, Calif., three stepsons, Drew Gary, of West Hollywood, Calif., Darryl Gray, of Orange, Calif., and Derek Gray, of Laguna Niguel, Calif., and four sisters, Dorothy Seeber, of San Diego, Sandra Fleet Mooers, of Rancho Santa Fe, Calif., Susan Fleet Welsch, of Aspen, Colo., and Sally Fleet of San Francisco.

OXFORDIAN PRODUCTIONS IN SHAKESPEARE SUMMER STOCK

By Richard F. Whalen

Summer stock theater begins in just a few months, and two acting companies that offer Oxfordian productions have announced their plans for the season.

The Hampshire Shakespeare Company of Amherst, Massachusetts will be doing Measure for Measure, Macbeth and The Two Gentlemen of Verona from June 26 through August 18. Tim Holcomb, a society trustee, is artistic director of the company. He plans to direct Measure for Measure from a strongly Oxfordian point of view.

This is the fifth season for Holcomb's company, which performs in the garden of the Lord Jeffery Inn at Amherst and Look Park Amphitheater in nearby Northampton. Both are in central Massachusetts and easily reached by vacationers in the Northeast. For details write Holcomb at Box 72, Amherst, MA 01004 or call 413/256-0002.

This is the sixth season for the Carmel Shakespeare Festival in Carmel, California. Executive director Stephen Moorer plans Oxfordian productions of The Taming of the Shrew and The Merchant of Venice from August 26 through October 8.

Productions are in the outdoor amphitheater called the Forest Theater, just a short walk from the center of Carmel.

The Carmel Shakespeare Festival is totally Oxfordian, even to the extensive program notes. The festival is a major theater event in California, drawing about 3,000 spectators each season.

For information write to Moorer at box 222035, Carmel, CA 93922 or call 408/622-0700.

Another society trustee, Charles Boyle, is artistic director of the Ever Theater in Boston. His acting company just concluded ten performances of As You Like It in the great hall library of Emmanuel Church, next door to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Boston. Boyle directed it and played Touchstone.

In its first review the Boston Phoenix was generally quite favorable, referring at one point to Boyle's "smooth, accomplished Touchstone." When the performance run was extended, the newspaper, a major voice for the arts in the Boston area, took a second look and reported:

"Charles Boyle's Ever Theater brings last month's presentation of the Bard's pastoral masterpiece back for an encore. The acting here is, on balance, not up to the Huntington level, but the production in the cozy confines of the Emmanuel Church library is often more fun, with entrancing period music, an erratic but enchanting Rosalind, and a generous view of Shakespeare's characters."

The Huntington Theater, a major institution in Boston, was staging at the same time its own elaborate production of the same play. As Boyle points out, the Huntington's budget was reported to be around \$250,000. And the reviewers were not kind. Boyle's budget was reported to be somewhat less.

Boyle continues to work on the Oxfordian aspects of As You Like It and has written a paper for the Shakespeare Association of America, whose members are mostly Stratfordian professors. Boyle will join a roundtable discussion on aspects of acting Shakespeare at the Association's annual meeting in Chicago in March.

* * *

OXFORDIAN BULLETIN BOARD POSTED IN CYBERSPACE

Oxfordians now have their own bulletin board on the Internet, the world-wide network of computers linking tens of millions of people, many in academia. Anyone with a personal computer and a modem can participate easily and for not much money. And Oxfordians can be found on EVERMORE1.

Marty Hyatt, a professor at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, with Bill Boyle, a librarian/archivist of Somerville, near Boston, took the lead to set up an Oxfordian bulletin board on Internet. Twenty-two Oxfordians, mostly in the U.S. but from as far away as Australia, are now active.

The Oxfordians started out on the Stratfordian bulletin board called, paradoxically, SHAKSPER. After a few lively exchanges on the authorship question, tempers flared, and the bulletin board's editor, Professor Hardy Cook of the University of Maryland, called a halt. Oxfordians can still participate in the SHAKSPER electronic conversations, but not on the authorship question. Perhaps not too surprising; the editor of the Shakespeare Quarterly probably adheres to the same editorial policy.

Precluded from discussing authorship issues on SHAKSPER, the Oxfordians set up their own bulletin board, called EVERMORE1. Anyone who wants to join should send an E-mail note to Bill Boyle at: WEBB1107@Delphi.com stating "subscribe EVERMORE1".

Boyle expects that by the end of this year, in addition to the EVERMORE1 discussion group, he will have electronic archives available for society members (or anyone on Internet) to access. Also under consideration is the creation of a "home page" on a World Wide Web site. World Wide Web (WWW) is the latest wave in Internet growth, and simply stated WWW sites allow for use of the Internet in a graphical Windows-like environment. The graphical interfaces are much more user-friendly, indexing of information can be more powerful, and graphical images such as portraits, the six signatures, pages from the Geneva Bible, etc., can be made available in addition to text.

Just a few months ago there appeared in cyberspace a new WWW site based in California called "The Shakespeare Web". It is still so new that there is very little in it, but it is a glimpse of the online future. Interestingly, in their "queries" section, one of the first questions was from a high school student in Alaska asking for information on the authorship question. Within a few days SOS member Wayne Shore of San Antonio posted a balanced response mentioning Charlton Ogburn's "The Mysterious William Shakespeare", Richard Whalen's "Shakespeare: Who Was He?", and Irvin Matus' "Shakespeare, In Fact."

For anyone interested in the authorship question, Boyle says the burgeoning new world of Internet is the place to be: "Whether it is talking to other Oxfordians, finding material on Shakespeare (searchable full text of all the works), or reaching out to anyone interested but not yet convinced about authorship, this is where each and every member of the society can help make a difference."

From the President

...to an ever reader. News. Oxfordians are active from downtown Chicago to cyberspace: More than a dozen society members and trustees will attend the annual conference of the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA) in Chicago at the end of March. Society members who will participate in seminars include Charles Vere Lord Burford, Andy Hannas of Purdue and Trustee Charles Boyle, artistic director of the Ever Theater in Boston.... The SAA's membership of 800 is mostly Stratfordian academics; and in the SAA president's message this year he muses on how to answer questions about Oxford. His answer: Great artists can be ordinary people from ordinary places.... But another Stratfordian, Harold Bloom, postulates "an aristocratic sensa of culture" in Shakespeare's art. In his new best-seller, The Western Canon, the prodigiously well-read Yale professor puts Shakespeare at the pinnacle of "The Aristocratic Age" of world literature.... In England the de Vere Society is growing steadily in membership; and there are plans for a newsletter.... Charles Burford has been invited to a return engagement at the Boston Public Library. He'll speak April 5, this time in the large auditorium. His talk a year ago drew an overflow crowd, many of whom had to be turned away.... Burford's lecture tour is off to a good start this year. And the \$3,000 challenge grant by Mr. and Mrs. Albert H. Walker of Baltimore to support his tour has generated a most generous response by society members.... This is the last call to members who want to donate Oxfordian books to college libraries; the books are free of charge thanks, again, to a major donation by the Walkers... Lee Young of Chatham, MA has received on behalf of the society 25 books from the library of the late Rev. John T. Golding, a direct descendant to Arthur Golding, Oxford's uncle and tutor. The Rev. Mr. Golding was an early member of the Cape Cod chapter of the society.... Trustee Trudy Atkins of Greensboro, North Carolina, has a "Town Meeting" planned for the society's 19th annual conference September 29-October 1 in Greensboro. The chief justice of the state's Supreme Court will participate and the public will be invited. The Town Meeting is co-sponsored with the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival, the English Speaking Union and Friends of the Library from six local libraries. The call for papers has been issued; full details on the conference in the next issue of the newsletter.... More immediately, the annual dinner honoring Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, will be held on April 28 at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, MA. Trustee Charles Boyle is once again the host and master of the Oxfordian ceremonies on the Stratfordian university campus. About one hundred attended last year's dinner.... Charles's brother, Bill Boyle, has collected a full set of society newsletters dating back 30 years, to March 1965. He's planning to develop a listing of articles and find a way to make them available to society members at cost. He asks that those interested write or call (617-628-4258) so that he can better estimate the volume of requests and perhaps achieve economies of scale.... The Stratfordian newsletter, the Shakespeare Newsletter from Iona College, carries in its current issue a review of two books on Greenes Groatswroth of Wit contributed by Oxfordian Winifred Frazier of the University of Florida. Also a letter from myself on the most serious errors perpetuated in the editor's review of Irvin Matus's book.... And more and more Oxfordians are meeting on Internet for convivial cyberspatial multilogues that range instantaneously from Australia to Canada and across America. Words, words, mere words, no matter from the heart (T&C 5.3.109).

— Richard F. Whalen

A review of The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe
by Charles Nicholl. New York; Harcourt Brace, \$24.95.

By Richard Whalen

For all those scholars who dismiss Christopher Marlowe's violent death as simply the result of a brawl over a bar bill, Charles Nicholl's new book provides a healthy dose of harsh, Elizabethan realism.

And for Oxfordians, his book, The Reckoning, confirms again the view that the Elizabethan Age was also an age of murderous, political intrigue. The romanticized view of Shakespeare's times purveyed by Stratfordians is given the lie in this minutely detailed account of spies, con men, double agents and government informers.

Nicholl delves deeply into the records of the three men who were with Marlowe when he reportedly was stabbed in the right eye by Ingram Frizer, who claimed self-defense. He shows that all three had long, close connections with the secret world of spying and disinformation. Marlowe was probably rubbed out by double agents who lied to the coroner.

Predictably, the Stratfordian historian A. L. Rowse didn't like the book. In the New York Times Sunday Book Review, he loftily proclaimed it his duty to inform the public that it was a case of accidental manslaughter with "Marlowe himself to blame as everybody knew at the time...he was bound to come to a bad end."

In the daily Times, however, Michiko Kakutani called Nicholl's book "dazzling detective work", not a biography as such, but "an adroitly reasoned historical hypothesis." She praised it for "its masterly evocation of a vanished world, a world of Elizabethan scholars, poets, con men, alchemists and spies, a world of Machiavellian malice, intrigue and dissent."

Nicholl credits Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum with discerning that Sir Walter Raleigh was a key figure behind the scenes, but Nicholl sees Raleigh not as one of the perpetrators, but as a victim in the tangled case.

After disposing of several other false trails, Nicholl addresses briefly the theory that Marlowe did not die in 1593 but was spirited to the Continent where he wrote the works of Shakespeare. Nicholl's assessment is the last line of his book:

"This is no kind of trail at all."

* * * * *

A Significant Request by the Earl of Burford

The Earl of Burford is compiling a press kit for promotional purposes and urgently requests all those who have press articles on his tour to send him either originals or good copies to the following address: 84 Chandler Street, #2, Boston, MA 02116-6254. All originals will be returned to their owners within two weeks. Should you wish to check with Lord Burford as to whether the articles you have are needed before you send them, please call him at 617-350-8798.

* * *

A CLARIFICATION

The title of Walter Klier's book, which was published last year by Steidl Verlag of Gottingen, Germany, is Das Shakespeare- Komplott. This new title superceded the pre-publication title, which was mentioned on page 6 of the Summer 1994 issue.

JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

We use a cyclical year so that membership runs from the time a person renews or joins in 1994 to the following month of the following year. A person paying their dues in April 1994, for instance, would have a member expiration date of May 1, 1995.

Haven't Renewed Yet? Why Not Do It NOW?!?!?

* * * * *

ALL ABOARD FOR LORD CHARLES BURFORD'S SPEECH AT THE STRATFORD ONTARIO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL FRINGE PROGRAM

He will speak at 10:30 A.M. on Saturday, July 8, 1995

Schedule for week through Monday,
July 3 through Sunday, July 9:
Stratford Festival Box Office
P.O. Box 520, Stratford, Ontario
Canada N5A 6V2
1-800-567-1600 or FAX 519-273-6173.

For accomodation information:
Tourism Stratford, City of Stratford
P.O. Box 818 N5A 6W1 Canada
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The Shakespeare Oxford Society

Greenridge Park, 7D Taggart Dr., Nashua, N.H. 03060-5591

Winter 1995

Newsletter

Vol. 31, No. 1B

Morse Johnson, Editor



An abridged critique of Shakespeare, IN FACT by Irvin Matus

by Morse Johnson

Matus based his book on four questions:

The first, is the contemporary record of and about Shakespeare [i.e. Will Shaksper of Stratford], the man and dramatist alike, so suspiciously lacking as the best of controversialists have posed it as being?

Second, are contemporary materials that associate Shakespeare with popular theater ambiguous, even suspect, especially in comparison with what we have of others in the theater of his day?

Which leads to the third question, was his reputation in his own time such that we should expect to find references to him that we would not expect of the others?

Finally, what about the current favorite, the Earl of Oxford? Are his 'qualifications' so compelling, the circumstantial evidence so authentic, as his partisans would have us believe?

Matus also reported that "virtually all the documents of Shakespeare, his colleagues and of the English Renaissance theater are available in facsimile, microfilm and modern editions. Therefore, the first source in this book will always be these materials to the greatest extent possible, and the voices of his contemporaries will be the first heard wherever appropriate. After all, the surest way to find Shakespeare is to visit him in the perspective and perceptions of his own age - not ours."

Professor John W. Velz, Department of English University of Texas, wrote this blurb on the book jacket of Shakespeare, IN FACT:

Readable despite its extensive scholarship and therefore accessible to those who need it the most: Readers who don't know what to make of the challenge to Shakespeare's authorship. This book places Shakespeare in a larger context, which shows that there is nothing compelling in any of the arguments the Oxfordian raised against his authorship.

Professor Velz, himself, does not know the pivotal facts of Oxfordians which refute the Stratfordian attribution. Examples: Matus was not able to find a fact that nullifies the following facts that there was no contemporary document or reference which identifies Will Shaksper of Stratford as an author and no contemporary document or reference which identifies the author of the Shakespearean works as a Stratford man.

Richard Bentley, one-time President of the Chicago Bar Association and Editor of the American Bar Association Journal, wrote in Shakespeare Cross-Examination (American Bar Association 1961):

"Nowhere apart from the works themselves (underlining added) was Shaksper or Shakespeare referred to during his lifetime either as a playwright or a poet.

"No contemporary historian mentions either Shaksper or Shakespeare.

"We find no external evidence to identify William Shaksper of Stratford, or Shakespeare the actor, as an author.

"During Shaksper's entire life...not one of his contemporaries ever referred to him personally as a writer. The only references to Shakespeare were to writings with which that name was connected, and none referred otherwise personally to a writer of that name.

"Shaksper lived unknown as a literary man, and died unnoticed.

"Some readers seem to have misunderstood what these words mean. As a result of assuming that the Stratford man was the writer, they have fallen into the easy error of construing any reference to Shakespeare or to the works as a reference to the Stratford man, or even as evidence that it was he who was the author. This is understandable and natural to all of us who were taught the orthodox tradition; but it is nonetheless an error. There are, of course, the works themselves, some of which were published during Shaksper's lifetime as having been written by Shake-Speare (Shakespeare). There are allusions in contemporary writings during Shaksper's lifetime to the Shakespeare works, and to a person who wrote them, without otherwise identifying him in any way. However, not one of these allusions during the lifetime of the man of Stratford referred to him in any way as a writer, or connected him with the writer, or made any allusion whatever to the writer to identify him even remotely with the man of Stratford. Accordingly none of those allusions has the slightest probative value as to the identity of the author.

"The statements made above can easily be checked in Appendix B, 'Contemporary Allusions' in Sir Edmund K. Chambers' work cited above. There he lists and quotes every one of the allusions no matter how tenuous the connection, beginning with Edmund Spenser's allusion to "Willy" in 1591 and including allusions by Nashe; Greene; Chettle; Edwardes; Willobie; Drayton; Southwell; Covell; Meres; Barnfield; Marston; Harvey; Elizabeth Wriothesley, the Countess of Southampton; Weever; Jonson; Bodenham; Mannigham; Parsons; Davies; Scoloker; Camden; Barksted; Speed; Webster; Heywood; Carew; Freeman; Drummond; Howes; Porter; Beaumont; Bolton; as well as some allusions which are anonymous or whose authors are not identified. Chambers has included everything that could conceivably be supposed to refer to the author or the actor, and he himself rejects a large number of them as not in his opinion being references to either. Other allusions were after the death in 1616 of the man of Stratford.

"Not one of all the allusions to the works made during Shaksper's lifetime contained a single word which identifies the writer with the man of Stratford or with the actor. In none of them is there a reference to the Stratford man to indicate he ever wrote anything or was the author of anything other than his will.

"All of the allusions during the Stratford man's lifetime to the works or to someone who wrote them are part of what the orthodox Stratfordians call the 'documentary proof' of the authorship. But of what are they proof? Only of the fact that there was a writer who wrote magnificent poetry and plays under the name of William Shake-Speare (Shakespeare). On that point, however, there is and has been no disagreement whatsoever, anywhere. But to offer these allusions as proof of who the writer was, whether the man of Stratford or someone else, is another matter. On that point all of these allusions are, in legal jargon, 'incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial', for not one of them even purports to identify the writer with anyone."

....

Justice Wilberforce presided in the case of In Re Hopkins' Will Trusts (Chancery, June 16, 17, July 8, 1964) 3 All England Reports 46 (1964) in which the question of the authorship of the works of 'William Shakespeare' was directly at issue. He found that the Shakespearean authorities who testified on behalf of the authorship of Will. Shakspeare of Stratford could not present any fact or facts that said Will. Shakspeare was identified by any of his contemporaries or documentation as the playwright 'William Shakespeare'.

....

Matus evaded these facts reproduced by Charlton Ogburn
in his THE MYSTERIOUS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1992)

"Writing a hundred years ago of the allusions to Shakespeare collected by Ingleby, Frederick G. Fleay observed:

They consist almost entirely of slight references to his polished works, and have no bearing of importance on his career. Nor, indeed, have we extended material of any kind which is abundant for most of his contemporaries, being in his case entirely absent. [My underlining.] Neither as addressed to him by others, nor by him to others, do any commendatory verses in connection with any of his or other men's work published in his lifetime - a notable fact, in whatever it may be explained.

"Shakespeare proved to be the exception again (underlining added) when he died without the tribute paid him of the elegiac verses that poets at the time habitually indited upon the passing of one of their fellows. So far as the record shows, the death of the greatest of them all went unremarked, by them or anyone else. Shakespeare's departure from the scene was as silent and mysterious as his arrival upon it had been. He was like a ship that approaches out of the fog, gradually taking shape, is for a while dimly vanished. But in his passage, he had left the world such creations of language as had never before and perhaps never would again come from one human mind."

"Charles Dickens wrote:

It is a great comfort, to my way of thinking, that so little is known concerning the poet. The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery and I tremble every lest something should turn up."

* * *

Shakespeare, IN FACT is a biography of Shakespeare which, according to The Cambridge History of English Literature (Vol. 5, p. 166) does not deserve any confidence:

No biography of Shakespeare that deserves any confidence has ever been constructed without a large infusion of the tell-tale words 'apparently', 'probably', 'there can be little doubt', and no small infusion of the still more tell-tale 'perhaps', 'it would be natural', 'according to what was usual at the time', and so forth.

SHAKESPEARE'S KNOWLEDGE OF LAW AND USE OF LEGAL TERMS

MATUS: "The most reliable assessment of the playwright's knowledge of law...is that of P.S. Clarkson and C.T. Warren, 'whose reading of Elizabethan drama revealed that about half of Shakespeare's fellows employed on the average more legalisms than he did; and some of the great many more. Most of them also exceeded Shakespeare in the deal and complexity of their legal problems and allusions and with a few exceptions display a degree of accuracy at least no lower than his.'"

STRATFORDIAN CUSHMAN K. DAVIS in his The Law in Shakespeare (West Publishing Company, 1884 - 302 pages): "...that Shakespeare was more addicted to the employment of legal nomenclature than any English writer (excepting, of course, the jurists) is incontestable... law terms were present in his mind as standards of comparison with things which nothing but his own despotic imagination could have brought into relevancy...."

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE CAMPBELL (1850) said about Shakespeare that he had "a deep technical knowledge of the law", and an easy familiarity with some "of the most abstruse proceedings, in English jurisprudence". And again, "Whatever he indulges this propensity he uniformly lay down good law."

RICHARD GRANT WHITE, considered by Professor S. Schoenbaum as one of the two most notable nineteenth century American authorities, wrote: "No dramatist of the time, not even Beaumont, who was a younger son of a judge of the Common Pleas, and who after studying in the Inns of Court abandoned law for the drama...Legal phrases flow from Shakespeare's pen as part of his vocabulary, and parcel of his thought... Shakespeare used his law just as freely in his first plays, written in his first London years, as in those produced at a later period, just as exactly too...."

* * * *

SHAKESPEARE'S PROFICIENCY IN THE SPORTS OF THE NOBILITY

MATUS: "Another found in Shakespeare that is posed as being sacred to courtiers is his knowledge of falconry. To the contrary, Thomas Heywood was no courtiers...It is unlikely that Heywood was any more a true aficionado than Shakespeare...Shakespeare, however, might have had a personal reason for his interest in falcon for it was the crest of the Shakespeare coat of arms."

SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND: AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND MANNERS OF HIS AGE. Published in 1916 under an ode to Shakespeare by the Poet Laureate, Robert Bridges, the work covers its subject in thirty chapters, each of which takes up a different feature of the Elizabethan Age with particular reference to the Treatment it receives Shakespeare. The two contributors are all (Stratfordians)...

It devotes 150 pages to "Sports and Pastimes" in Elizabethan and Jacobean times. Hunting, falconry, coursing with greyhounds, archery, fencing and dueling, horsemanship, dancing, and games are treated in detail and illumined with quotations from Shakespeare that show his precise and comprehensive knowledge of the subject. A portrait of the dramatist is limned as a man of leisure able to have indulged freely in the nobility's active diversions and makes himself proficient in them. If he was ever guilty of a slip in

treating them he has not been caught in it. Concluding the section on hunting, the Honorable J.W. Fortescue comments that probably 'in all ages good sportsmen, like good men, are rarer than bad; but good there must have been in all times, and among the best of the sixteenth century we must certainly rank William Shakespeare.

....

SHAKESPEARE'S LEARNING

To the extent of Shakespeare's Learning, Matus relies on T.W. Baldwin's 1500 page William Shakespeare's Small Latine and Lesser Greeke (1944).

As Peter Moore, however, points out that "for the upper two thirds of the trivium, Baldwin states that he had mastered rhetoric (II, pp. 237-8, 668) and knew some logic had theories behind them, but as Miriam Joseph explains, Shakespeare's Use of the Arts of Language (Columbia University Press, 1947), these two disciplines can be simply defined as mastery of about one hundred and eighty to two hundred figures of speech. Modern Americans know several figures of speech: simile, metaphor, parallel, analogy, hyperbole, pun, and a few more. Classically educated Elizabethans knew prothesis (the addition of a syllable at the beginning of a word), epenthesis (an extra syllable in the middle), proparalepsis, aphaersis, syncope, synaloepha, apocope, metathesis, antisthecon, tasis, anastrophe, tmsis, hysteron, proteron, hypallage, hyperbaton, epergsis, zeugma, syllepsis, hypozeuxis, and over one hundred more. Miriam Joseph shows that 'with two or three negligible exceptions' the entire theories of rhetoric and logic can be illustrated with examples of Shakespeare's works (p.4) and that 'he utilized every resource of thought and language known to his time' (p.4).

* * * *

In 1578 the poet Gabriel Harvey addressed deVere before the Queen:

Thy merit...is a wonder which reaches as far as the heavenly orbs...
Phoebus Apollo has cultivated thy mind in the arts...witness how greatly
thou does excel in letters thou has drunk deep draughts not only of
the muses of France and Italy, but has learned the manners of many men...
and the arts of foreign countries...neither in France, Italy nor Germany
are any such cultivated and polished men.

Edmund Spenser wrote in a sonnet to deVere in a preliminary to The Fairie Queen (1596):

the love thou does bear
To the Heliconian imps [the Muses] and they to thee.
They unto thee, and thou to them most dear.

One of the odes in John Soowthern's Pandora (1584) paid a tribute to deVere:

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ...it pleases me to say too, | Only himself he must resemble |
| (with a loving I protest true) | Virtues so much in him assemble |
| That England we cannot see, | ...I shall never sing |
| Any thing like Dever, but he | A man so honored as thee |
| | And both of the Muses and (of) me. |

George Puttenham in his The Arts of English Poets (1589) disclosed:

...many noble Gentlemen...have written commendably (but) suffered it to be published without their own names (and) written excellently well would appear if their doing could be found out and made public with the rest, of which number is first Edward Earl of Oxford.

From Charlton Ogburn's The Mysterious William Shakespeare:

In 1619 Anthony Munday, dedicating all three parts of a new edition of his Primaleon of Greece to Henry, 18th Earl of Oxford, spoke of 'having served the most noble Earl your father of famous and desertful memory' and later in the dedication of 'your father's matchless virtues.'

Three years later Henry Peacham published a 250-page work on education as it was in his day and as it should be. In a chapter on Poetry he calls the reign of Elizabeth 'a golden age' (for such a world of refined wits and excellent spirits it produced whose like are hardly to be hoped for in any succeeding age), as follows:

"Edward Earl of Oxford, the Lord Buckhurst, Henry Lord Paget, our phoenix, the noble Sir Philip Sidney, M. Edward Dyer, M. Edmund Spenser, Master Samuel Daniel, with sundry others whom (together with those admirable wits yet living and so well known) not out of envy, but to avoid tediousness, I overpass."

Ogburn previously wrote, "The suspicion inevitably arises that those who might have been expected to make much of Shakespeare, who towered above them all in his genius, knew him as another identity and in it were constrained not to mention him."

* * * *

Did Will. Shakspeare of Stratford ever go to Italy?

Matus reports that "Oxford's tour of Italy...looms large in the arguments for his authorship. Numerous plays that predominate in the first decade of Shakespeare's production are set in Italy, and according to the Oxfordians (emphasis added) the author's knowledge of Italian topography displays an intimacy that could only come from first-hand experience."

In his Essays on Shakespeare (London: MacMillan, 1874) 46 years before Looney identified Oxford as "William Shakespeare", Professor Karl Elze pointed out:

"The poetic imagination may ever be so lively and creative, and the power of intuition ever so highly developed but one thing cannot be disputed, namely, that he bestows upon no one a knowledge can only be acquired either by experience or be imparted by others."

The Professor leaves no doubt as to how he thinks Shakespeare acquired his knowledge of Venice which is shown by a "prototype unquestionably in one of those summer residences...and does not confound the Isola-de Rialto with the Ponte di Rialto.

A Significant Powerful Case for Oxford

Matus recognizes that Oxfordians "think they have their most powerful case" for Oxford in the poems and plays, with all the references and allusions to the life and concerns of Oxford. He's right. Charlton Ogburn, Ruth Miller and others have detailed the many specific and striking correspondences, which do, indeed, represent a most powerful case.

Most tellingly, however, Matus then shrinks from the task and spares only nine paragraphs in the whole book to address the most significant evidence for Oxford as the author. He cites only two plays out of the whole canon. All's Well That Ends Well gets only two paragraphs; Hamlet seven paragraphs, much of it on extraneous matters, such as the coat of arms on the quartos.

Matus ducked the main issue and totally compromised the premise of his book. He could not, in fact, claim that the following, Oxford's biographical detail in The Winter's Tale, is not significant:

At the outset of Edmund Campion's trial condemning him as Roman Catholic, he began his defense:

"Since what I am to say must be but that which contradicts my accusation, and the testament on my part no other but what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me to say 'Not Guilty'".

There is no evidence that Will Shakspeare of Stratford (1564-1616) ever met Campion (1540-1581) or the judges and witnesses, or could have heard Campion's "defense" above. One of the three hired witnesses was Anthony Munday who in 1579 had dedicated a book to his patron, Edward de Vere, the word "testament" to "testimony" for Hermione's defense when her husband accused her of being unfaithful - THE WINTER'S TALE (Act III, ii, line 22 onwards):

Since what I am to say, must be but that
Which contradicts my accusation and
The testimony on my part no other
But what comes from myself, it shall scarce boot me
To say 'Not Guilty'..."

* * * *

A poem written by the poet George Chapman when de Vere was 26

| | |
|--|---|
| I overtook, coming from Italy, | From whence his noblest family was deriv'd; |
| In Germany, a great and famous Earl | He was beside of spirit passing great |
| Of England; the most goodly fashion'd man | Valiant and learn'd, and liberal as the sun |
| I ever saw; from head to foot in form | Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects, |
| Rare and most absolute; he had a face | Or of the discipline of public weals: |
| Like one of the most ancient honour'd Romans | And 'twas the Earl of Oxford. |

Editor's Note

Regarding the article by Randall Barron on England's Helicon (p. 3 Section 1A of this issue), we followed up, as Barron suggested, at the Harvard libraries. Why the index in Professor Rollins's edition of England's Helicon says simply de Vere "alias Shakespeare" is a puzzle. In a footnote (p. 166) Rollins is surprised that a mutilated version of poem no. 36 should be included in Looney's book (1921) of Oxford's poems as "Oxford's (alias Shakespeare's)". In Rollins's edition (1927) of The Paradise Dainty Devises, however, he had disparaged Looney's authorship theory as hardly worth much attention. (page lix). Rollins was general editor of the Fourth Variorum edition of Shakespeare until his death in 1958, which makes it likely that his "alias Shakespeare" was simply shorthand recognition (maybe with tongue in cheek?) of the then novel proposition by Looney.

* * * * *

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THE INDIANAPOLIS NEWS (4-18-95)

English Earl Says Ancestor Was The Real Shakespeare

By Nelson Price

Supporters of his cause range from actor Sir John Gielgud to conservative pundit William F. Buckley.

Meet the Earl of Burford.

You also may call him Charles Vere, his common name.

The British-born, Oxford-educated aristocrat is in Indianapolis as part of a crusade: to convince the public that William Shakespeare's plays and sonnets were written by his ancestor, the 17th Earl of Oxford, Edward de Vere.

Cheerful, polite and articulate, Vere might not fit your image of an earl. He's 30 years old, lives in Boston and is married to a Canadian rock singer.

"I met her in Beverly Hills," Vere explained, referring to his wife, Louise Robey.

"She came to a lecture I gave. I guess I won her over."

Hoosiers interested in hearing Vere's arguments - packaged as "Uncovering the Mystery of William Shakespeare" - will get a chance tonight.

Sponsored by the Contemporary Club of Indianapolis, the earl will speak at 8:30 p.m. at Civic Theater. His talk is free and open to the public.

"I don't say this with contempt, but even an open-minded child of 5 could understand there was no way this uneducated man from Stratford-on-Avon could have created these masterful plays and sonnets," Vere commented during an interview.

"The vested interests - academicians in America and Britain, where 'Shakespeare' is a tourist industry - are resistant.

"But I'm optimistic. High school and prep school teachers are open-minded and welcoming. Publishers are increasingly being swayed by the evidence - and realizing they could get in on the ground floor."

Actually, Vere contends, his arguments aren't new - just gathering steam. He became intrigued with the Shakespeare authorship controversy as a boy while listening to his grandfather.

"Oxfordians" (as supporters of the Earl of Oxford theory are known) say that sympathizers abounded in the 1700s. That's about the time English theatrical impresario David Garrick perpetuated what Vere calls "the myth of the Stratford man."

So what, pray tell, is the Oxfordian evidence?

Vere points to everything from his ancestor's Bible (with scriptures underlined that correspond to quotations in Shakespeare plays) to the lives of the two men in question.

A highly educated nobleman and a confidante of Queen Elizabeth, the Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) devoted his life to the arts, sponsored theatrical companies, wrote sonnets under his own name and traveled to Italy and other settings in Shakespeare's plays, Vere said.

"The plays are autobiographical, as is almost always the case with good fiction," the earl said. "Most characters are obviously based on people in his life...."

"Like the character of Hamlet, the Earl of Oxford was the conscience of his nation. He criticized governments in his plays and exploded myths about the Elizabethan court."

The plays' political irreverence - and lampooning of aristocratic families - are among the primary reasons the Earl of Oxford hid his authorship, his descendant contends.

"He had to be anonymous to survive," Vere said. "Plus, theaters were considered hotbeds of anarchy. They were found in 'red light' districts. A nobleman could get away with writing sonnets, but not plays."

"He also could sponsor acting companies, which he did. In fact, he poured his money into the theater and almost ruined himself financially."

What about the fellow from Stratford named William Shakespeare (1564-1616)?

Evidence indicates he was uneducated, Vere contends.

"Shakespeare's parents were definitely illiterate, as were his children," he added. "There were no public libraries in Stratford, which was merely a rural village of 127 houses about four day's ride from London."

The Earl of Oxford probably chose the pseudonym "Shake-speare" because it conjured up warrior images, the earl said.

"The name didn't matter because there wasn't the cult of the author," Vere added. "Plays were billed as, 'Performed by a certain theatrical company.'"

The earl lives in Boston partially because most of his speaking engagements are in North America.

He is working on several books, including a collection of his poetry, a journal about his travels and a novel that he conceded is autobiographical:

"It's about being an outsider at Oxford."

* * * * *

In his "Shakespeare IN FACT" (1994), Irvin Leigh Matus posed "several basic questions that are at the heart of the [Shakespeare authorship] debate." One of the questions is, "Are [the Earl of Oxford's] 'qualifications' so compelling, the 'circumstantial evidence' so authentic, as his partisans would have us believe?", to which Matus answers, "No".

Any objective scholar, who reads the articles on page 3 herein, would undoubtedly conclude that Matus either did not research competently or avoided facts that indisputably proves the "Earl of Oxford's" qualification to write the Shakespeare's plays, poems, and sonnets.

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Contents in chronological order.

Bold indicates that the dedication contained a full-page display of the de Vere arms.

FOREWORD

This work is a compilation of surviving dedicatory epistles to Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), a man famous in his day not only for being one of Queen Elizabeth I's top courtiers, but for his intellectual prowess, his Italianate and avant-garde tendencies, his talent at writing poetry and comedies, and his being a several-time tournament champion at the tilt. What has been overlooked the most is his tremendous contribution as patron during Elizabeth's Golden Age, he being second only to the queen in total amount of book dedications. It seems that history has only bothered about rehashing his few scandals, which truly pale next to his accomplishments.

These letters very much give the sense that Oxford not only allowed his name to be attached to these writer's works, but that he got personally involved—by inspiring translations of works he favored and by critiquing the original ones—certainly remarkable for a man of his elevated status. Oxford also employed and housed some of the top writers of the era (Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, to name a few), and he owned at least two acting companies throughout his lifetime. This collection of dedication letters from books on music, medicine, the military, religion, classics, philosophy, geography, history, and fiction will hopefully help restore Oxford to his rightful place as nurturer of Elizabethan literature and letters.

The text has been completely edited for the modern reader, staying as faithful to the original as possible. Square brackets indicate added or reworked words. Left untouched were all name-spellings, the consistently uncapped "great" in Lord great Chamberlain, and the word "vertue" because of its personal significance to Oxford, a Vere, and simply because that was the way it was spelled. Latin phrases and verses have been translated, but the verses were often problematic. Translator Alex Watts-Tobin, U.S.C. doctoral student in Classics, gave his best to the challenging and often bewildering task. Two indices follow the text to define allusions and archaic words; some were untraceable, but I'd be pleased to learn from readers those I couldn't track down.

.....

In his Palladis Tamia (1598) by Francis Meres, "the best Poets for Comedy among the Greeks are these...so the best for Comedy amongst us bee, Edward Earl of Oxforde..."

Charles Wisner Barrell observed in the Saturday Review of Literature (5,1,37): "...Dr. A. B. Grosart, one of the great pioneers in Elizabethan research, commented in 1872 on the force and beauty of Lord Oxford's early verse and lamented their seemingly unfilled promise in these words: "An unlifted shadow lies across his memory."

DEDICATION OF THE SONNETS, 1609

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF
THESE INSVING SONNETS
MR. W. H. ALL HAPPINESSE
AND THAT ETERNITIE
PROMISED

BY
OVR EVER-LIVING POET
WISHETH
THE WELL-WISHING
ADVENTVRER IN
SETTING
FORTH

T.T.

"OVR EVER-LIVING POET" is a phrase only used of a man after he is dead. In his The Mystery of Mr. W. H. (London 1923) Colonel B. R. Ward printed twenty-three examples of that phrase over a period of about three hundred years, e.g. Shakespeare's Part 1 Henry VI:

"That ever-living man of memory Henry the Fifth."

Since Will. Shakspere of Stratford was living in 1609, he could not have been the authentic author of "William Shakespeare's" Sonnets; he, therefore, could not have been the authentic author of "William Shakespeare's" plays and poems.

Since Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, died in 1604, he could have been the author of "William Shakespeare's" plays, poems and sonnets.

* * * * *

!! Elizabethan Review !!

Since the startup of the Elizabethan Review in the Spring of 1993, subscriptions have increased from the first total of 85 to more than 125, including three dozen colleges and public libraries. Most prominent among the latter are the University of Ferrara in Italy, Cambridge University in England, Harvard and Stanford, the Universities of Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Chicago, Ohio State University, not to mention the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Boston and San Francisco public libraries. There are smaller schools as well, such as Concordia College in Oregon, West Chester College in Pennsylvania and C. W. Post in New York. In addition, the MLA International Bibliography and the World Shakespeare Bibliography index and abstract the Elizabethan Review, which is also being included in the MLA's Directory of Periodicals.

What all this indicates is a greater openness within the halls of academia than has previously been assumed by Oxfordians. To the extent that Oxfordian scholarship is now being made available to students and professors on a formal basis is a great step forward. In fact, it represents the first time that the Oxfordian argument is being made within academia. For these reasons, I count the launching of the Elizabethan Review a success and hope that SOS members will continue to support its publication.

Excerpt from THE SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP QUESTION
Evidence for Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1971)
by Craig Huston

Oxford's uncle was Arthur Golding, a learned scholar, who tutored him in French, Latin and Greek. At this time Golding also was engaged in translating Ovid's Metamorphoses from Latin into English. This was the first translation of Ovid's work into English and, since Oxford at the time was closely associated with the man who made the translation, it would appear likely that he was familiar with it. Scholars are impressed with the number of allusions to Ovid's Metamorphoses contained in the Shakespeare plays, although the poem itself is mentioned only once in all the plays:

... 'Tis Ovid's Metamorphoses;
My Mother gave it me."

Titus Andronicus, IV,1,42

On his tour of Italy in 1575 Oxford wrote a letter from Siena. It is likely that while there he saw the mosaic in the cathedral which depicts "The Seven Ages of Man." This is reflected in Jacques's speech in As You Like It, II,7,138-166.

Also on his Italian tour Oxford wrote letters from Padua and Venice. It is likely that he also visited Mantua, which is situated between these two places. Mantua is mentioned nineteen times in Romeo and Juliet, The Taming of the Shrew and The Two Gentlemen of Verona, evidencing the author's familiarity with the place. At the Palazza del Te in Mantua, which was built by Julio Romano, is a mural painting portraying the Siege of Troy, which was painted by Julio Romano. This painting corresponds to the description of the Siege of Troy in The Rape of Lucrece (II.1367-1533), where Shakespeare refers to the "wondrous skill" of the painter (1528). Julio Romano is the only artist mentioned in all the Shakespeare plays. In The Winter's Tale, V,2,105 a gentleman refers to a statue as: "A piece many years in doing, and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano." Julio Romano was an architect, a sculptor and a painter. Another painting of his, "Gradasso, the giant-dwarf", is in the Vatican. It well could be that the line in Love's Labour's Lost, III,1,182, "This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid," which is meaningless, could be a First Folio typesetter's error, and that the original line was "This Signior Julio's giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid."

It would seem unlikely that William Shakespeare of Stratford, who never had been out of England, would have known about Julio Romano. On the other hand, it would seem very likely that Oxford would not only have known about him, but would also have seen his work and remembered it (underlining added).

* * * * *

Stratfordian George Sampson asks in The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (University Press, 1938):

"How did [Shakspeare] reach the wit, the humour and the assured mystery of verse exhibited in a delightful comedy like Love's Labour's Lost? These are some of the questions to which we desire an answer, but answer there is none."

SOS Meeting to Focus on Shakespeare and the Law

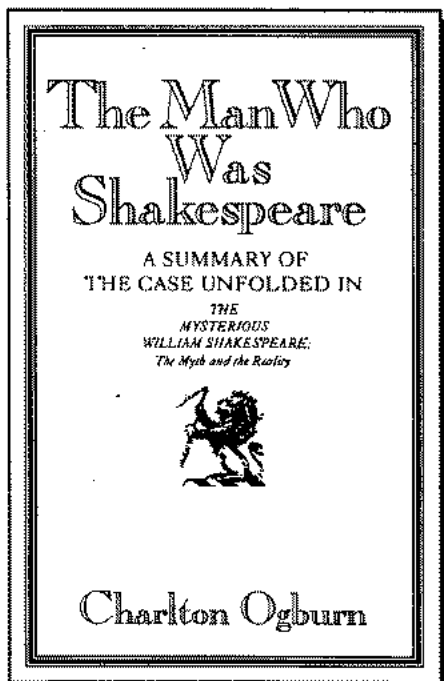
As you know, a packet of information regarding the Shakespeare Oxford Society's 19th annual meeting Greensboro September 28 - October 1 was put in the mail by June 1, and it sounds like a winner!

Activities will get underway Thursday evening with a Renaissance Roundtable on the Guilford College campus, less than ten minutes from our host hotel, the Airport Marriott. On the podium with Charles Burford will be Daniel Kornstein, a New York barrister and author of Kill All the Lawyers?, published by the Princeton University Press last year, Len Deming, our treasurer and New Hampshire lawyer, Chief Justice James Exum, Jr., who has just retired from the North Carolina Supreme Court, Dennis Kay, an Oxford Don, who has written a recent Shakespeare biography, and Russ McDonald, Shakespeare scholar of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro. Trudy Atkins has just learned that the University of Chicago's David Bevington, who was also on the roster, will not return from New Zealand until early October so will be unable to participate; however, he has suggested several other outstanding academics whom she is contacting at this time.

That's just the beginning. There's the Friday evening banquet Mystery Guest; Saturday evening's performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream by the North Carolina Shakespeare Festival (also a Sunday matinee performance of Macbeth for those who elect a double bill) and a score of exciting papers dealing with new research and findings.

Trudy's mailer will provide information on airline and car rentals for those who wish to visit the Blue Ridge Mountains and Biltmore House, owned by William Cecil, where the Gheeraedt portrait of William Cecil is on display with other 16th century furnishings from England.

She strongly recommends bringing your spouse for whom she will arrange tours of the Furniture Capitol of the World. In fact, the word is that savvy shoppers can pay for the trip with the substantial savings on fine furniture in the area. And that's not all, but watch for your mailer. It will be worthwhile.



New Paperback Packs Masterful Punch

Once again Charlton Ogburn has done nearly the impossible. In THE MAN WHO WAS SHAKESPEARE, a 96 page paperback, he condenses the case he first presented in THE MYSTERIOUS WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (932 pages and in its fourth printing). In one tenth the pages, he lays out the essential evidence that disposes the claim made for Will Shakspeare of Stratford and establishes the Earl of Oxford as the man behind the greatest name in literature.

With this little volume he also demonstrates that small is beautiful... and easy to pass along and recommend to the uninformed or the misinformed but educable reader.

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EPM, Publishers of *The Mysterious William Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., hc, 932 pp., \$37.50; *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, pb, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, 96 pp., \$5.95

SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE GETS THE FACTS WRONG: STRITMATTER AND ANDERSON REPLY

As most Oxfordians recognize, a few of the anti-Oxfordians are playing fast and loose with the facts as they try to knock down the evidence for the 17th Earl of Oxford as the true author of the works of Shakespeare.

Smithsonian Magazine perpetuated two sins of factual inaccuracy in its April issue. The occasion was an update of its article in 1987 that had given a fairly well balanced account of the case for Oxford. But the magazine apparently has now been influenced by Stratfordian disinformationists.

The short item in the current issue summarizes in two sentences how Charlton Ogburn "provocatively explores parallels between Oxford's personal life and travels (Padua, Venice, Verona) with settings and specific incidents in the plays."

Then follow the offending sentences:

"Anti-Oxfordians wryly note that Oxford died in 1604 -- when at least 11 of Shakespeare's plays had yet to be written.

So the debate continues. In 1993 a scholar found that Oxford's Bible had a number of marked passages that Shakespeare used in the plays -- but it proved a false alarm. Oxford, it appeared, had acquired the Bible with the notations already in it."

To set the record straight on the facts, letters were sent to the editor of the Smithsonian making the following points:

First, there is no documentary evidence whatsoever that any of Shakespeare's plays were written after the 17th Earl of Oxford died in 1604. Post-1604 dates are given to a dozen plays because first mention of them only appears after 1604. But posthumous publication or performances of literary works is not at all unusual. All the plays could have been written before 1604. And Oxfordians have demonstrated why pre-1604 dating is more rational.

Three of the plays, in fact, were never mentioned until their publication seven years after the Stratford man died, thus fatally disqualifying him, too, as the author. The reasoning, of course, is specious in both cases.

Secondly, the marginal notes and underlinings in Oxford's Bible were almost certainly made by Oxford. The magazine was undoubtedly misled into calling these markings "a false alarm" by an erroneous report in a booklet written for an exhibit at the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Folger owns Oxford's Bible. The authors of the booklet got the date wrong for the Bible, using 1596. This enabled them to denigrate the findings of the scholar, Roger Stritmatter of UMass-Amherst.

In fact, the dates on the Bible itself are 1569 and 1570. Oxford's records show that it was purchased for him in 1569/70. There was no time for anyone else to mark the Bible. And several of the markings are on verses that are echoed in Shakespeare's plays. (See the Spring 1994 issue.) Roger Stritmatter and Mark Anderson critically scrutinized the Smithsonian:

Smithsonian
900 Jefferson Drive
Washington D.C. 20560

April 9, 1995

To the Editors:

Your characterization of Edward de Vere's Geneva Bible ("Smithsonian Updates", April 1995, p. 40) as a "false alarm" in the Shakespeare controversy constitutes an alarming suspension of critical judgment and journalistic ethics. Revisiting a 1987 Smithsonian article on the authorship controversy, you dispute the significance of the 250 recently-discovered concurrences

between Shakespeare's Biblical citations and the notations found in the 1569-70 de Vere Bible on the spurious grounds that de Vere "had acquired the Bible with the notations already in it."

This hypothesis, presumably borrowed from the Folger Library exhibit Catalog, Roasting the Swan of Avon, does not withstand critical scrutiny. Catalog editors assert that "among the twenty-eight instances in which the annotator has written something in the outer margins, the binder's knife has cut away part of the inscription eighteen times. That would suggest that the annotations were made sometime before the Bible was bound for the Earl of Oxford.

Nonsense. It suggests only that the Bible was first annotated and then, sometime in the past four hundred years, it was cropped. The specificity of the Folger claim is spurious. To substantiate it, the Catalog omits, and sometimes misrepresents, vital information which confirms de Vere as the annotator.

For starters, the Catalog fails to report that while the Bible retains its original binding embossed with de Vere's crest as the 17th Earl of Oxford, the original spine of the book has been replaced. It is standard bookbinding practice, as Folger curators should know, to crop rare books when replacing the spine. Further weakening the Catalog's hypothesis is the State record--also conveniently suppressed in the exhibit Catalog--documenting de Vere's purchase of a Geneva Bible in 1570.

For "Smithsonian Updates" to be correct, the hypothetical previous owner would need to have acquired, annotated and resold the Bible in under a year, after which de Vere would have purchased it, removed the original binding and bound the annotated pages with his own silver-engraved crest.

But there is one further problem with the Smithsonian o'erhasty conclusion: why hasn't it been confirmed by comparing the annotator's handwriting to de Vere's? Paleography should prove easily enough that the annotator is not de Vere. But no. The near-perfect match between the two samples would scotch this absurd scenario...once and for all.

That Shakespearean orthodoxy is driven to such desperate, ultimately self-defeating, expedients to thwart the reception of new evidence does not inspire confidence in the reasoning upon which conventional views depend. Indeed, concluded former Folger Program Director Richmond Crinkley in his review of Charlton Ogburn's 1984 book, in the Folger's own Shakespeare Quarterly: "If the intellectual standards of Shakespeare scholarship quoted in such embarrassing abundance by Ogburn are representative, then it is not just authorship about which we have to be worried." Few chapters in the recent history of the authorship controversy illustrate Crinkley's warning more aptly than your uncritical endorsement of Folger disinformation about the de Vere Bible.

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Lectures in Living Literature

Speaker: Charles Vere, Earl of Burford, a descendant of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, believed by many to be the man behind the name Shakespeare. The authorship controversy, simmering for over 200 years, has come to a boil with mounting evidence that it wasn't Bacon or Marlowe or Derby who wrote the poems and plays (even less the man from Stratford-on-Avon), but the Earl of Oxford, a poet, playwright and patron of the arts at the Court of Queen Elizabeth.

As Sigmund Freud noted, "The man of Stratford... seems to have nothing at all to justify his claim, whereas Oxford has almost everything." Prominent articles on the subject have appeared in the Harvard Magazine, the Smithsonian, the New Yorker and the National Review. And the Atlantic Monthly recently devoted its cover story to the debate. New books on the subject are appearing every year, while VisNet has broadcast an authorship debate moderated by William F. Buckley to universities across the country.

An honors graduate of Oxford University, Charles Burford is a dynamic, authoritative advocate of the case for the Earl of Oxford, and enjoys the challenge of debates and Q&A sessions. He has spoken before over 200 audiences in the United States, including capacity audiences at the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Smithsonian Institution. He has also appeared at numerous universities including Harvard, Yale, Duke and Smith, and has spoken at high schools and prep schools all over the country.

He has appeared on many radio and TV programs, both locally and nationally, including a PBS-Frontline documentary, "The Shakespeare Mystery," which explored the case for Oxford, and the BBC documentary entitled "Battle of Wills." His appearances have inspired local media interviews, generating hundreds of news stories and TV reports. Young, vibrant, adept at tailoring his talk to his audience, Charles Burford has proven himself to be a most provocative, informative and entertaining champion for Oxford.

"Charles Burford is an engaging, learned and engrossing speaker. On the subject of Shakespeare, they don't come any better. Heartily recommended."

— William F. Buckley Jr.

"Charles Burford is eloquent and persuasive in defense of the thesis that his ancestor, the Earl of Oxford, wrote the works of William Shakespeare."

— Ambassador Paul H. Nitze, The Nitze School
Johns Hopkins University

"Burford's presentation was impressive both in style and content; it certainly is appropriate for Harvard and other educational institutions to be open (and eager!) to entertain new or different ideas and interpretations."

— Professor Woodland Hastings, Harvard University

"Several students told me they thought it was one of the best lectures they had ever heard. They were impressed by Lord Burford's erudition and his articulate presentation."

— Benjamin Foster, Chrm. English Dept., Choate Rosemary Hall

For itinerary and fee schedule, write or call:

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FROM THE

Gentleman's Magazine.

BY

JOHN WALKER, LL. B.

FELLOW OF NEW COLLEGE.

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VOL. III.

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II. MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES, INCLUDING ANECDOTES
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THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, PATERN-
OSTER-ROW; AND MUNDAY AND SLATTER, OXFORD.

1814.

MR. URDAN, *Stratford-upon-Avon, May 30, 1759.*

A DOUBT of a new kind, and not unworthy of notice, has arisen among some, whether the old monumental bust of Shakespeare, in the collegiate church of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, had any resemblance of the bard: but I find not this doubt to have taken date before the public regard shewn to his memory, by erecting for him the curious cenotaph in Westminster Abbey: the statue in that honorary monument is really in a noble attitude, and excites an awful admiration in the beholder; the face is venerable, and well expresses that intenseness of serious thought, which the Poet must be supposed to have sometimes had.

The face on the Stratford monument bears very little, if any resemblance, to that at Westminster; the air of it is indeed somewhat thoughtful, but then it seems to arise from

Unlikeness of Shakespeare's Busts.

a cheerfulness of thought, which, I hope, it will be allowed Shakespeare was no stranger to. However this be, as the faces on the two monuments are unlike each other, the admirers of that at Westminster only, will have it, that the country figure differs as much from the likeness of the original, as it does from the face in the Abbey, and so far endeavour to deprive it of its merit: this is a derogation I can by no means allow, and that for the following reasons:—

Shakespeare died at the age of 53. The unanimous tradition is; that by the uncommon bounty of the then Earl of Southampton, he was enabled to purchase a house and land at Stratford, the place of his nativity: to which place, after quitting the public stage, he retired, and lived cheerfully amongst his friends some time before his death. If we consider these circumstances aright; that Shakespeare's disposition was cheerful, and that he died before he could be said to be an old man, the Stratford figure is no improper representation of him.

The exact time when the country monument was erected is now unknown; but, I presume, it was done by his executor, or relations, probably while his features were fresh in every one's memory, and perhaps with the assistance of an original picture, too. These are no unreasonable suppositions, and which, I think, cannot easily be overthrown, especially when corroborated (as I hope to prove they are) by the following observation, not bidder to made, that I know of, by any one.

Facing the title page of one of the folio editions of Shakespeare's Works, there is a head of him engraved by one Martin Droeshout, a Dutchman, and underneath this cut appear the following lines, written by Ben Jonson, who personally knew, and was familiarly acquainted with our Poet.

The figure that thou here see'st put,
 It was for gentle Shakespeare cut;
 In which the graver had a strife
 With nature, to out-do the life.
 O could he but have drawn his wit
 As well in brass as he hath hit
 His face, the print would then surpass
 All that was ever writ in brass.
 But since he cannot, reader, look
 Not on his picture, but his book.

B. J.

In these verses Ben. plainly asserts, that if the engraver could have drawn Shakespeare's wit in brass, as well

Contrivance for Muscular Exercise.

as he has done his face; the performance would have been preferable to every thing of the kind; a convincing proof how great a likeness he knew there was between the poet and that picture of him:

Now, if we compare this picture with the face on the Stratford monument, there will be found as great a resemblance as perhaps can well be betwixt a statue and a picture, except that the hair is described rather shorter and straiter on the latter, than on the former; and yet this difference will not, I dare say, be material enough to justify the doubt I have attempted to remove; and, if not, then I hope what I have here advanced will induce those gentlemen, who have not thought so well of the Stratford monument, to have a better opinion of it for the time to come.

1759, June.

J. G.

Obituary of Winifred Frazer

Winifred Frazer, an outstanding Professor, esteemed Oxfordian and charming friend, died of cancer on April 11, 1995 in Gainesville, Florida. She was 79.

She was born in Chicago, received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, a master's degree from the University of Maine and a doctorate from the University of Florida. She was a professor in the English Department for 29 years and was a Professor Emeritus.

She wrote books on Eugene O'Neill, American drama and Shakespeare and wrote many other scholarly articles. She wrote a play "Truth is Stranger" on the Earl of Oxford. She also wrote a number of articles for both the Shakespeare Oxford Society Newsletter and the orthodox Shakespeare Newsletter such as Two Studies of Greene's Groatsworth and an unfinished draft which is summarized by the following quotation hereof, "So who is this Shakespeare? I am open to any scenario. No matter how many Shakespeares there may have been, I am convinced that Oxford created the sonnets and plays which pass as Shakespeare's".

She is survived by her husband, three sons, three brothers and six grandchildren.

SHAKESPEARE/OXFORD IN 'JEOPARDY'

By Richard F. Whalen

The Shakespeare Authorship Question keeps coming up -- and sometimes in the most unlikely places.

In the past few months anyone who watches much television would have a hard time escaping the question. It was raised during the Academy Awards program, in an Oldsmobile TV commercial, and on the intellectual's TV game show, "Jeopardy", where the answer is the question.

In the print world, the authorship problem also appeared in the New York Times, Scientific American and Smithsonian magazine. And the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, all on its own, came up with a full-page spread on the case for Oxford.

On "Jeopardy", Alex McNeil of Auburndale, MA, a society member, was asked to describe the Shakespeare Oxford Society - in a few words. McNeil put in a good work for Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford. And then went on to win that round of the show.

During the Academy Awards program, Anthony Hopkins, the actor, was announcing an award for best screenplay. He choose to lead into the award for the mostly unsung screenwriters by noting that scholars have argued whether Shakespeare wrote the plays -- or whether someone else did, some unsung poet/playwright.

In the Oldsmobile commercial a character leads into a pitch for the car by setting up a dialogue:

"Are you open-minded?" (Answer on screen: "I like to think so.")

"Ah, so it's possible then that Shakespeare didn't write all those plays." (Answer on screen: "It's possible.")

"Or that there was no big bang?" (Answer on screen: "Certainly.")

Then comes the pitch for a new model car.

And on National Public Radio a commentator on the program, "All Things Considered", reflected on Shakespeare's career and said the case for the Stratford man as the author would be more convincing if, instead of the verse on his tombstone, he had written something along the lines of "Goodnight, sweet prince..." The commentator said she admired Shakespeare, "whoever she was."

In Minneapolis, journalist Maura Lerner heard about the authorship controversy from a friend, read Charlton Ogburn's The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality and "found it all very fascinating." Her full-page article on the News with a View Page appeared under a Will Shaksper signature and the headline: "Could a man with handwriting like this really construct the greatest literature in the English language?"

"For me," concluded Lerner, "what was once an article of faith was now, forever, an open question. And it reawakened an interest in Shakespeare and his works that I haven't felt since college. I've even started reading Hamlet again."

Scientific American touched on the authorship question in a major article on computer graphics by Lillian R. Schwartz, a consultant to AT&T Bell Laboratories. She suggests that the engraving of "Shakespeare" in the First Folio was traced from a pattern of Queen Elizabeth's face. "A detailed comparison on the computer," she writes, "revealed that most of the lines in the Droeshout engraving and the queen's portrait by George Gower are the same." Her computer graphics illustrate the article in the April issue. Some Oxfordians will recall her report on the same study in the March/April 1992 issue of Pixel, the Magazine of Visualization.

Calvin Trillin, a leading writer for The New Yorker magazine, volunteered to The New York Times (4-24-95) what he would not say in his remarks on Shakespeare's birthday at the Theater for a New Audience: "I am not going to bring up the embarrassing question about whether he was really Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, one of those people who are thought to have written Shakespeare." He said he would try to get into the proper mood "by using words like 'wouldst' and by waxing eloquent in couplets."

Asked later whether he had any real interest in the case for Oxford, Trillin said no. He was reminded that other New Yorker writers, including James Lardner, Wilfred Sheed, E. J. Kahn Jr., and Hamilton Basso, had found more than a little merit in the arguments for Oxford as the author. Trillin demurred.

* * * * *

FELICIA LONDRE IS CO-AUTHOR OF SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL GUIDE

There are more than 140 Shakespeare festivals worldwide and all are described in a new reference book co-authored by Professor Felicia Hardison Londre of the University of Missouri, a member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

The 624-page guide from Greenwood Press is entitled Shakespeare Companies and Festivals: An International Guide. The editors are Professors Londre, Ron Engle of the University of North Dakota and Daniel J. Watermeier of the University of Toledo.

The publisher describes the book as "the culmination of years of travel by the authors and contributors visiting companies and festivals throughout the United States and around the world, interviewing key personnel, touring physical plants, observing audiences, examining publicity materials, annual reports, etc., and reviewing productions first hand." Not surprising then that the guide is priced at \$95.

The profile of each festival provides a wealth of detail, ranging from the annual budget and audience demographics to artistic philosophy and audition procedures. Included in the guide are two Oxfordian festivals: Stephen Moorer's Carmel Shake-speare Festival and Trustee Tim Holcomb's Hampshire Shakespeare Company of Amherst, Massachusetts.

Felicia Londre, who is Curators' Professor of Theater at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, lectures frequently on the case for the 17th Earl of Oxford as Shakespeare at universities. She has appeared at universities ranging from Utah and Minnesota to Hungary, China and Japan. Her book can be ordered by credit card direct from Greenwood at 800/225-5800.

* * * * *

ALL ABOARD FOR LORD CHARLES BURFORD'S SPEECH AT THE STRATFORD ONTARIO SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL FRINGE PROGRAM

He will speak at 10:30 on Saturday, July 8, 1995

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OXFORDIANS MAKE THEIR MARK AT STRATFORDIAN CONFERENCE

Oxfordians were very much in evidence at the annual conference of the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA), held in Chicago at the end of March.

Ten trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society and four society members attended the three-day meeting. And two trustees participated in conference seminars.

Once again, Charles Vere Lord Burford, a descendant of the 17th Earl of Oxford, and Charles Boyle, artistic director of the Ever Theater in Boston, joined Stratfordian professors in seminars. Burford's was on A Midsummer's Night Dream; Boyle's on how Shakespearean scholars might contribute to more informed performances of the plays. Both made valuable contributions to the discussions.

Equally valuable were the "sidebar discussions" with key Stratfordians, including Tom Pendleton, editor of the Shakespeare Newsletter; Louis Marder, CEO of the Shakespeare Data Bank; David Bevington of the University of Chicago, the new SAA president; and Bruce Smith of Georgetown University, the outgoing president. (The SAA elects a new president every year.)

Professor Smith led the curatorial team that perpetrated the two egregious errors in an exhibit at the Folger Shakespeare Library last year. They got the date wrong on Oxford's Bible, thus enabling them to discredit the marginalia by Oxford, and they misidentified Bacon as Oxford in a 1904 caricature by Max Beerbohm, published almost two decades before J. Thomas Looney identified Oxford as Shakespeare.

In his luncheon speech to 675 Stratfordian professors (and 14 Oxfordians) Professor Smith recognized the Shakespeare Oxford Society in a light-hearted way. As one of the his mock budgetary initiatives for the SAA he included an increase in "defense spending in the face of challenges by the Marlowe Society, the Middleton Project and the Shakespeare Oxford Society." (Professor Gary Taylor, co-editor of the Oxford Shakespeare, is reported to have concluded that Thomas Middleton wrote Macbeth. Previously, Taylor and others have suggested that Middleton wrote the witches' scene [3.5] and perhaps had a hand, circa 1610, in other scenes.

Next April the SAA will hold its conference in Los Angeles in conjunction with the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress. The president of the Congress is Sir John Gielgud, who signed the petition calling for serious research into the evidence for Oxford as the author and who has said he is very much inclined to side with the Oxfordians.

In addition, one of the seminars will be "Fictions of Shakespeare's Life". The seminar leaders invite papers on "creative biographical glosses to Shakespeare." Then they add: "Contributions touching in part on the Authorship Controversy will be considered, but card-carrying conspiracy theorists need not apply." Despite the jocular jibe, at least one Oxfordian will undoubtedly join this seminar discussion.

Charles Boyle is leading the effort to have as many Oxfordian scholars as possible as seminar participants next year in Los Angeles.

Russell des Cognets of Lexington, KY, a society trustee, began years ago to encourage an Oxfordian presence at SAA meetings. Oxfordians are recognized members of the SAA now, and their presence is being felt.

"SAA meetings are a great entertainment," said Richard Whalen, society president. "We see the leading Stratfordian professors in action, trying to understand the works without considering the author. We can make friends and influence professors in corridor conversations. And at the end of the day the Oxfordians get together to discuss the latest wrinkles in

Stratfordian scholarship. I hope many more Oxfordians will consider attending the next one in Los Angeles, especially our strong contingent of Californians. In this way we can maintain firm, friendly pressure on the Stratfordian establishment to begin serious research into the evidence for Oxford."

For information on SAA membership and conference registration, call or write Nancy Hodges or Jill Bagwell at the English Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 75275.

* * * * *

LORD BURFORD LAUNCHES 1995 LECTURE SEASON;
DEBATES STRATFORDIAN SCHOLAR ON NPR 'TALK OF THE NATION'

Charles Vere Lord Burford launched his 1995 lecture tour with major appearances at the Indianapolis Contemporary Club, the Tuckahoe Women's Club of Richmond, Virginia, and the Boston Public Library. He is now in his fourth year of lectures, carrying the word about the 17th Earl of Oxford to thousands in audiences across North America.

In addition, Burford reached a nationwide radio audience on June 1 on National Public Radio's afternoon talk show, "Talk of the Nation", moderated by Ray Suarez. With Burford on the NPR program was Professor Stanley Wells, co-editor of the Oxford Shakespeare.

The two covered a wide range of argument in the hour-long program, which included a half dozen calls from listeners. As usual, Burford delivered a masterful presentation of the evidence for Oxford as the author. Oxfordians, even while trying to be objective, would probably conclude that Professor Wells seemed off balance and occasionally testy. He got into trouble trying to use the First Folio prefatory poems, the Stratford monument's inscription and the so-called "post-1604" plays. Inevitably, he tried to argue the 1610-11 date for The Tempest.

Burford's Boston appearance was a return engagement at the public library, one of the largest in the nation. He delivered a new lecture he has developed, called "Hamlet's Secret". About 175 Bostonians were in attendance.

At Indianapolis, his audience numbered more than 450. Warren Wyneken, a society member of Fort Wayne, Indiana, reported that Burford received a long ovation. "I would guess that we will expand our Indiana membership," said Wyneken. Burford's talk was preceded by a major article in the Indianapolis News. Society member Mary Jane Meeker, who is also a club member, arranged for Burford to be invited to speak.

About 500 heard him speak at the Tuckahoe Women's Club, 200 at the Twentieth Century Club in Pittsburgh and 150 at the Chilton Club in Boston. He also spoke at the annual Oxford Day Banquet at the Harvard Faculty Club in Cambridge, Massachusetts. About 70 Oxfordians, including several new members, attended the dinner, arranged annually by Trustee Charles Boyle.

Next on Burford's schedule are lectures at the Hyde Museum in Glens Falls, New York, June 17, arranged by John Nassivera, a Glens Falls native, and a landmark appearance July 8 at the Shakespeare Festival at Stratford, Ontario. The festival appearance is a first for the society, a breakthrough secured by Trustee and Secretary John Price of Key West, Florida. Eileen Duffin of London, Ontario, is arranging a special reception for Burford at Stratford.

Aaron Tatum of Memphis, who has sponsored several lecture visits for Burford, has additional plans for him in Tennessee this Fall. (Tatum managed to be one of the call-in listeners on the NPR talk show, and he made two good points.)

Society members who would like to arrange lectures by Lord Burford in their cities can call him directly (617/350-8798) regarding his schedule and Trustee Trudy Atkins (910/454-3516) for ideas and advice on making Burford's appearance a success.

JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604), as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

We use a cyclical year so that membership runs from the time a person renews or joins in 1994 to the following month of the following year. A person paying their dues in April 1994, for instance, would have a member expiration date of May 1, 1995.

Haven't Renewed Yet? Why Not Do It NOW?!?!?



Oxford in Venice: New Light on an Old Question

By Alan H. Nelson, Professor of English, University of California, Berkeley

It has long been known that Edward de Vere, seventeenth earl of Oxford, spent approximately fifteen months abroad in his mid-twenties, departing from England (or at least from London) on 7 January 1575 and returning in April 1576. Oxford's travels took him to Italy by way of Paris and Strasbourg, and back again by way of Siena and Paris. His itinerary has been discussed by Eva Turner Clark, who believes that he spent about six months in Venice. Oxford was certainly in Venice by 24 September 1575, and probably a considerable time before that, since in his letter of that day he reported recovering from a sickness that had prevented him from traveling as he might have wished. He seems to have left Venice definitively on 12 December 1575. He evidently took at least one side-trip, for he wrote Burghley a letter from nearby Padua on 27 November. During his time in Italy he also may have visited Palermo, and, we may assume, cities not recorded in archival documents.

Evidence that the bulk of Oxford's time in Italy was spent in Venice occurs in a statement made by Henry Wotton in 1617 concerning Oxford's son, Henry de Vere eighteenth earl of Oxford, to the effect that Henry's father, "when he arrived in Venice, took no trouble to see the rest of the country, but stopped here, and even built himself a house". Further support comes in the form of a letter written by the Venetian ambassador at Paris on 3 April 1576:

The Earl of Oxford, an English gentleman, has arrived here. He has come from Venice, and according to what has been said to me by the English Ambassador here resident [=Dr. Valentine Dale] speaks in great praise of the numerous courtesies which he has received in that city; and he reports that on his departure from Venice your Serenity had already elected an Ambassador to be sent to the Queen, and the English Ambassador expressed the greatest satisfaction at the intelligence.

A poem printed in 1606, but not (so far as I know) cited hitherto in an Oxfordian context, sheds new light on Oxford's time in Venice. This poem came to my attention by a chance perusal of Mark Eccles's Brief Lives: Tudor and Stuart Authors, in Studies in Philology, Texts and Studies (Fall, 1982), pp. 11-13. Eccles reports that "Nathanael" Baxter, author of Sir Philip Sydney's Ourania, That is, Endimions Song and Tragedie, Containing all Philosophie (1606: STC 1598), had been a servant of Oxford's in Venice. Evidence for Eccles's assertion occurs in Baxter's use of the first person plural ("us" and "we") in a most curious dedicatory poem addressed to Susan nee Vere, Oxford's third daughter, born to Anne nee Cecil 26 May 1587. In order to comprehend the poem, it is helpful to know that Susan married Philip Herbert 27 December 1604, at Whitehall, at the age of seventeen (he was twenty). Herbert was created earl of Montgomery in 1605 and earl of Pembroke in 1630. In 1606 Susan was thus countess of Montgomery.

The poem (from Sig. A3v, reproduced p. 6) is an acrostic on the posy, VERA NIHIL VERIVS SVSANNA NIHIL CASTIVS, which Oxfordians will recognize as a variant of Oxford's posy, VERO NIHIL VERIVS. The first word of Oxford's posy, VERO, is here changed to VERA because the word as applied to Susan must be the feminine rather than the masculine of the ablative singular in Latin. The posy may be translated: "Nothing is truer than Vere (feminine); nothing is chaster than Susan".

The poem is in six rhymed iambic pentameter stanzas, the stanzas varying in number of lines and consequently in rhyme scheme according to the words of the posy. The gist of the poem is that Susan's father, who bore his version of "this Mot" (French mot, i.e., "word", or "posy") inscribed in his ring, was called back from Venice to England, encountered pirates before reaching Dover, and finally begot Susan.

The poem may be paraphrased as follows:

- 1) The prince who bore this posy engraved about his golden ring was a valiant man: before thou wast conceived, he roamed in Venice with (native) gallants in the Italian springtime.
- 2) He omitted nothing which might serve as a pastime, particularly Italian sports and the song of sirens. "Hopping Helena" with her "warbling sting" infected the "Albanian" nobleman, just as they infected all Italy.
- 3) The Eternal Majesty, vigilant to free enslaved souls from infamy, recalling your sacred virginity, urged us to make speedy repair to your mother, eternally beautiful; thus did this prince beget thee.
- 4) So wast thou begot, chaste and princely Nymph, under the tuition of Cecil, protected by friends of the highest fortune, among an esteemed court. Nor do I write this merely to flatter thee. No pen can depict thy propagation; may all heavens bless thee.
- 5) We landed from Italy stripped naked, having been captured by base pirates; horror and death assailed the noble earl (if princes are capable of being frightened by cruelty). Thus the beginnings of every good thing are difficult.
- 6) Married art thou to great Montgomery, a lady without peer, fit for him only; I knew him, sober and chaste, as a knight in Welsh Cardiff in my younger years - granting that temperance and continence may decorate an earl in this world: knights of the Sidney mold, like him, are scarcely to be found.

I will now go through the poem in greater detail, considering certain local difficulties, using stanza numbers as guideposts:

- 1) The first stanza provides unprecedented evidence that Oxford wore a ring inscribed with his posy. (For more information on this subject, see Joan Evans, English Posies and Posy Rings, Oxford, 1931). This may be one of the two rings shown in the Marcus Gheeraedts portrait, reproduced in color as the frontispiece of Miller's edition of Looney (volume 1). Oxford wears two rings on the middle finger of his left hand: perhaps the simpler of the two is his posy ring.

I suppose that we may take the statement that Oxford "roamed Venice"

literally. His companions, "Callants of th'Italian spring", may be "young" or "lively" gallants; but perhaps we should take this phrase literally also. Oxford may well have arrived in Venice in very late April or May. Wotton, as we have seen, testified that Oxford "took no trouble to see the rest of the country, but stopped here" in Venice: perhaps he remained in Venice almost exclusively from April or May to December, though with a brief visit to Padua in November.

2) The second stanza is crucial for Oxfordian biography. That Oxford engaged in various pastimes including Italian sports is supported by the well-known statement by Edward Webbe (1590) that Oxford participated in a tourney in Palermo; less well known but perhaps equally important is the discovery by Julia Cooley Altrocchi that in a book published at Naples in 1699, "milord of Oxford" (evidently though not certainly the seventeenth earl) is named among participants in a tournament, his costume and behavior being described at length. The description is somewhat fantastical, but Oxford apparently established a reputation which earned him a place in the tournament, whether it was a real or an imagined event. Here I can do no better than cite Altrocchi, to the effect that Oxford

was well and very companionably known at the performances of the Commedia dell' Arte and that he was recognized as being not only so good a sportsman but so good a sport and possessed of so resilient a sense of humor that he could be introduced into a skit and, with impunity, described as meeting a woman in tilt and being unhorsed and rolled to the ground with her in the encounter!

I believe that Altrocchi was unaware of our dedicatory poem, and would therefore be happy to discover that her words "sportsman" and "sport" were anticipated by Baxter's word "sports".

Baxter's phrase "Syrens Melodie" must carry an erotic meaning, something akin to "female allures". The next phrase, "Hopping Helena with her warbling sting", clearly signifies a prostitute with venereal disease. A close equivalent to "Hopping Helena" is the alias "Jumping Judy" used in 1620 by a Cambridge prostitute whose real name was Juda Hudson; probably, however, "Hopping Helena" is to be understood as a generic designation rather than the "professional" name of a particular woman. Presumably "warbling" is a close equivalent to "Syren" in the preceding line; "sting" is both the cause and the painful effect of the disease, just as an insect both carries and imparts a sting.

That Oxford did in fact contract a venereal disease in Venice (according to Baxter's testimony) is confirmed by the next two lines, declaring that Helena and her sting "Infested th'Albanian dignitie,/Like as they poysoned all Italie". The Oxford English Dictionary confirms that "infested" was interchangeable with "infected" at the time the poem was written. "Albanian", a word which may refer to modern Albania but also meant "Scottish" (OED), for Baxter signified "of Albion" - that is, British. This fact is clearly revealed in a poem dedicated to Dorothy Hastings on the facing page (Sig. 4):

...
And thence arrived in Brittania,
Inquiring for Nymphs of high dignitie,
Great Pastorellas of Albania.

Thus Susan's father, the "Albanian dignitie", or British nobleman, was infected, "Like as they poysoned all Italie". This point is carried over into the third stanza.

This second stanza, however unpleasant, provides a possible explanation for the illness from which Oxford had just recovered when he wrote Burghley his letter of 24 September, and of his reluctance to visit Spain: "by Italy I guess the worse". Oxford's disease is further confirmed by Charles Arundel's cutting affirmation in December 1580 (PRO SP12/151,f.104) that Oxford "hathe a yerelie celebracion of the Neapolitan maladye", that is, syphilis (OED, under Neapolitan).

3) The third stanza provides the rationale for Oxford's return to England. I assume that the "eternall majestie" ever vigilant to free "Enthraled" (or enslaved) souls from "infamie" (or moral corruption) is God, but the allusion could also be to Elizabeth. Since Susan Vere did not yet exist, we are probably to understand that "Remembring" is equivalent to "anticipating" her "sacred virginitie". Thus the "eternal majesty" induced Oxford and his entourage, including Nathaniel Baxter, to flee infamy and return to England and to Anne Cecil. Although the stanza concludes with the positive assertion, "So did this Prince begette thee debonaire", Baxter has foreshortened time significantly: Oxford did not reconcile with Anne until December 1581, and Susan was not conceived until ten years after Oxford's landing at Dover in April 1576.

4) The fourth stanza begins by repeating the logic of Susan's "begetting". Since Susan's mother Anne nee Cecil died about a year after her birth, the education provided by "Cecilia" can only refer to the earliest months of Susan's life, unless (as I suppose) it is a reference to her upbringing in the Cecil-Burghley household. (I have tried without success to discover other relevant meanings in "Cecilia", perhaps related to music, of which Cecilia was a patron saint.)

The balance of the fourth stanza consists of a compliment to Susan's alliances, whether through blood or through friendships; a disclaimer of flattery by the poet; a statement to the effect that no pen is capable of providing a sufficient account of her very being (Baxter may have been running out of "-ation" words.)

5) Baxter next recounts the attack by pirates as Oxford and his entourage sailed from France to Dover in April 1576: horror and death frightened the noble earl - if earls might be subject to such fright. The stanza concludes with the proverb, "thus are excellent beginnings hard" (compare German: Aller Anfang ist schwer).

6) The final stanza pays compliments to Susan Vere: she has been married to the earl of Montgomery, and is a woman without equal and suited uniquely to him; he is sober and chaste, known to Baxter in Wales in earlier years (when his eyesight was better than it is now), if indeed temperance and continence may still adorn any earl beneath the sun. Baxter's closing compliment to Sidney (Sidney-like knights like the earl of Montgomery are scarcely to be found any longer) is appropriate here, since the work which follows is Sir Philip Sydneys Ourania, and since the principal dedicatee of the book is Philip's sister, Mary countess of Pembroke.

Baxter's poem is a commendable piece of craftsmanship, deft in its choice of the initial words which support the acrostic, competent though not consistent in scansion, and particularly clever in confining the negative sentiments to stanzas 2 and 5, both controlled by the negative posy-word NIHIL.

It may appear wildly inappropriate to a twentieth-century mind for Baxter to call public attention to the profligacy and venereal disease of the father of the young woman Baxter intends to compliment on her chastity; however, we must not judge a poem of 1606 by the sentimentality or the political correctness which rules in 1995.

How did Lord Oxford spend his time in Italy? We cannot know how he spent all his time, but Nathaniel Baxter reveals that he spent some of his time cavorting with Italian gallants and some of his time cavorting with Italian prostitutes or courtesans, from at least one of whom he contracted a venereal disease, probably syphilis. Knowing what we have learned since Ward's day, we should not be surprised. Ward, who did not know of Walsingham's letter to Henry Huntingdon earl of Hastings revealing that Anne Vavasor had given birth to Oxford's illegitimate child on 21 March 1581, had no satisfactory explanation for the affrays between Oxford and Sir Thomas Knyvet; but we, who know of Oxford's affair, know by the same token that Oxford had not been faithful to his wife at the time he returned to her in December 1581.

A closing, potentially happier point. Baxter's poem reveals that Oxford during his lifetime wore a ring inscribed with his posy, VERO NIHIL VERIVS. If his grave, whether in Hackney or in Westminster Abbey, is ever opened, there is some hope that the identity of the body may be confirmed by the inscription on the ring, assuming that he wore his posy ring to his grave, and that it remains with his body.

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I also wish to thank Peter R. Moore and Richard P. Roe for assistance and advice.

To the Right Noble, and Honorable Lady Susan Vera Mongomriana.

V Aliant whilome the Prince that bare this Mot,
 E Ngraued round about his golden Ring:
 R Oaming in VENICE ere thou wast begot,
 A Mong the Gallants of th' Italian spring.

N Euer omitting what might pastime bring,
 I Talian sports, and Syrens Melodie:
 H Opping Helana with her warbling sting,
 I nfested th' Albanian dignitie,
 L Ike as they poysoned all Italie.

V Igilant then the'eternall majestie
 E Nthraled soules to free from infamie:
 R Emembring thy sacred virginie,
 I Nduced vs to make speedie repaire,
 V Nto thy mother euerlasting faire,
 S O did this Prince begette thee debonaire.

S O wast thou chaste and princely Nymph begot,
 V Nder Ceciliass education
 S Trong in allyed friendes of highest lot,
 A Midd the court of estimation
 N Or doe I giue thee this for adulation:
 N O Pen can show thy propagation,
 A Ll heauens blesse thine operation.

N Aked we landed out of Italie,
 I Ntrhal'd by Pyratts men of noe regard,
 H Orror and death assayl'd Nobilitie,
 I F Princes might with crueltie be scar'd
 L O thus are excellent beginnings hard.

C Onioyn'd thou art to great Mongomria,
 A Peerelesse Ladie onely fit for him:
 S Ober and chaste, he was in Cardiff Cambria,
 T He Knight I knew before mine eyes were dimme,
 I F Temperance, and continence, an Earle may trimme,
 V Nder the Orbe of mightie Phoebes round,
 S Ydneian Knights like him are hardly found.

N.B.

RESPONSE TO PROF. ALAN NELSON'S
"OXFORD IN VENICE: NEW LIGHT ON AN OLD QUESTION"

By Peter R. Moore

I wish to congratulate Prof. Nelson for discovering new material on the Earl of Oxford, namely the poetry of Nathaniel Baxter. However, I must disagree with his interpretation of the meaning of the second verse of Baxter's acrostic poem to Oxford's daughter, the Countess of Montgomery. Prof. Nelson argues that Oxford caught syphilis in Italy in 1575 or 76, and that Baxter said so in these lines:

Never omitting what might pastime bring,
Italian sports, and Syren's Melodie:
Hopping Helena with her warbling sting,
Infested th'Albanian dignitie,
Like as they poysoned all Italie.

My disagreement has two causes. First, it would have been utterly unthinkable for Baxter to say that Oxford had syphilis in a dedicatory poem to Oxford's daughter, from whom Baxter was hoping for a gratuity. Second, the last three lines of this verse clearly refer to poisoning rather than to venereal disease.

Prof. Nelson correctly tells us not to judge Baxter's intentions by "the political correctness which rules in 1995". What we should rather be interested in are the rules of political correctness of 1606, which, as it happens, are precisely explained with regard to syphilis in John Graunt's 1662 Natural and Political Observations Upon the Bills of Mortality [1]. Graunt analyzed the weekly Bills of Mortality published by each parish of London from 1603 to 1624, giving the cause of death for a total of 229,250 people. Graunt was astonished to discover that only 392 of them were reported to have died of the dreaded pox, that is, syphilis. Graunt says that he considered suppressing this information, lest men be led to believe that they could sin without danger, but then he looked into his evidence a bit further:

upon inquiry I found that those who died of it out of [i.e., in] the Hospitals (especially that of King's-Land, and the Lock in Southwark) were returned of Ulcers, and Sores. And in brief I found, that all mentioned to die of the French-Pox were returned by the Clerks of Saint Giles's, and Saint Martin's in the Fields onely; in which place I understood that most of the vilest, and most miserable houses of uncleanness were: from whence I concluded, that only hated persons, and such, whose very Noses were eaten off[f] were reported by the Searchers to have died of this too frequent Maladie ...

In other words, only two poor parishes, out of a total of 114 [2], reported any deaths caused by syphilis, and those were of outcasts, derelicts, and persons so visibly eaten by the disease that the cause of death could hardly be hidden. The remaining 112 parishes and all of the hospitals (Kingsland and the Lock being leper hospitals [3]), disguised the true cause of death. So even the poorest of Londoners, so long as they had any family and place in society, and didn't live in the parishes of St. Gile's and St. Martin's, were officially protected in death from revelations of syphilis.

We now see something about the political correctness of the early seventeenth century (and we also see how well that society could conduct cover-ups). The consequences of indiscretion on this subject could be unpleasant. In 1594 Dr. Roderigo Lopez, physician to the Queen, was convicted of treason and executed, largely at the instigation of the Earl of Essex. But it was later reported that Lopez had let out professional secrets concerning Essex, "which did disparage to the Earl's honour", presumably meaning that Essex had a venereal disease. [4]

We may now ask what is implied by the theory that Baxter was publicly proclaiming that Oxford had syphilis, bearing in mind that a husband can pass this disease to his wife, and she to a child in the womb. We would have to suppose that Baxter, his publisher, Edward White, and the printer Edward Allde had literally gone mad. Baxter, trying to curry favor with and patronage from the powerful Herbert family, would be saying, in effect: 'Most wonderful and exalted Countess, I was with your wonderful and exalted father in Venice when he got syphilis, and soon thereafter he begot your Ladyship (which means that there's a good chance that your Ladyship is also syphilitic, as was your late mother). Would your Ladyship please reward me for my praise of your most noble family?'

It's probably unnecessary to add that under laws passed in the reigns of Edward I and Richard II, not repealed until 1887, slandering the nobility was punishable through an action of scandalum magnatum [5]. Even if I had no idea what Baxter's words meant, I would have to reject the syphilis theory.

But Prof. Nelson also reports that Charles Arundel testified in December 1580 or January 1581 that Oxford had annual visitations of the "Neapolitan maladye", which did indeed mean syphilis. A full evaluation of the testimony of Charles Arundel is far beyond the scope of this article, but a few points may be noted. Among the other grotesque charges, Oxford is accused of attempting to murder Rowland York, Lord Howard of Effingham (Oxford's best friend, according to Arundel), the Earl of Worcester and all of his servants, Sir Christopher Hatton, John Cheke (twice), the Earl of Leicester (twice), Sir Henry Knyvet, Philip Sidney, Arthur Gorges, Walter Raleigh (twice), and one Denny. As a result of all these charges, Oxford was not brought to trial, he was not imprisoned (unlike his accusers), he did not even lose the Queen's favor (though he did lose that in late March as a result of his liaison with Anne Vavasour. In short, the charges were not taken seriously, much to Arundel's chagrin.

Arundel made two later depositions against Oxford, and Arundel's co-slanderer, Lord Henry Howard, made several depositions of similarly lurid crimes against Oxford, but none of these other depositions mentions the Neapolitan malady. Meanwhile, the third accomplice, Francis Southwell, tried to distance himself and Howard from Arundel, and attempted to persuade Howard to abandon his bizarre charges in favor of some others (unspecified) that might have a chance of being believed.

In short, Charles Arundel's slanders against Oxford were not believed in 1581 by those in the best position to know the truth, and I do not see how Arundel's credibility improves with age.

That Oxford was not regarded as diseased, even by his enemies, is clearly implied by the opening clause of Thomas Vavasour's challenge to Oxford of

1585: "If thy body had been as deformed as thy mind is dishonourable ...".
[6] The animosity displayed throughout the letter makes its opening a remarkable testimony to Oxford's physical health and excellence.

Incidentally, spreading the word that one's enemy (or the enemy's mistress) had the pox was a commonplace slander for centuries. When Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, died in 1612, his enemies rejoiced and composed a vicious ballad in his dishonor. It ends,

But now in Hatfield lies the Fox
Who stank while he lived and died of the Pox. [7]

No historian takes such smears seriously without corroboration.

Even if I could not give any other interpretation to Baxter's odd lines about Hopping Helena and the Albanian dignity, I would have to dismiss the syphilis theory for the reasons already given. But the meaning of Baxter's words is not hard to decipher. He is saying that as long as Oxford was in Italy, regarded by Englishmen, especially Puritans, as the Land of Poisoners, his life was in danger, so the Queen ordered him home to save him.

The Italian for Helena is Elena (fem.) or Eleno (masc.). John Florio's 1611 Italian dictionary defines Eleno as:

Dogs-grasse or Deadly-dwale which is used to poison arrowheads. [8]

I do not know how this definition came about, but the Italian for 'poison' is veleno, defined by Florio as:

any kind of poison, venome, bane, or infection. Used also for witchcraft or sorcery by drinckes.

The OED mentions 'dog-grass' under 'grass' 2.b., without saying anything about it, but 'dwale' turns out to be deadly nightshade or belladonna. The OED's first two examples of usage of 'belladonna' (from 1597 and 1757) associate the term specifically with Venice. Florios Second Frutes of 1591 [9] translates Piu tira un sol pelo d'una bella donna to "Than doth one haire of Helens tresse", so John Florio links 'belladonna', which means 'fair lady', to Helen of Troy, the fairest of all ladies. In short, the Italian for Helen means belladonna, a poison used on arrows, and when Florio wanted to translate bella donna, meaning 'fair lady', into English he chose the word 'Helen'. So when Baxter uses that name in a Venetian context, we do well to start thinking of poison, and, sure enough, Baxter directly mentions poison in the last line of his verse. Before finishing this line, I will move on to the next one, concerning the Albanian dignity.

Thomas Coryat toured Europe in 1608, describing the sights he had seen in Coryat's Crudities of 1611. [10] At Venice, by the Doge's palace and St. Mark's Cathedral, Coryat reports of

The pourtraitures of foure Noble Gentlemen of Albania that were brothers, which are made in porphyrie stone with their fawchions [falchions] by their sides, and each couple consulting privately together by themselves, of whom this notable history following is reported.

The four brothers sailed to Venice from Albania in a ship full of treasure. Upon arrival two went ashore, while two stayed aboard ship, and each pair conspired to murder the other to enrich themselves. Rejoining for supper, each pair served the other a poisoned dish, and all four died, whereupon Venice seized their riches, "the first treasure that ever Venice possessed, and the first occasion of enriching the estate." So Baxter gives us another image of poison in Venice.

Note that, as Prof. Nelson points out, 'infested' meant 'infected', and Florio associates 'infection' with poison.

Now back to the Hopping Helena line. 'Warbling' is the song made by a bird, a creature that flies through the air, as does an arrow. And the word 'sting' had a much more deadly and venomous connotation back then than it does today, because we say a snake 'bites', while Shakespeare and his contemporaries used the word 'sting', for instance, "envenomed and fatal sting" (2 Henry VI, 3.2.267) or "lurking serpent's mortal sting" (3 Henry VI, 2.2.15).

Before explaining the full meaning of Baxter's verse, one last chore remains, namely a quick look at his punctuation. Baxter reserves the period for the end of each verse. When he completes a sentence within a verse, he places a colon (a modernizing editor would replace his colons with periods). So the last three lines of Baxter's verse do not refer back to the first two. In other words, "pastimes ... Italian sports, and Syrens Melodie" is one sentence, while "Hopping Helena ... th'Albanian dignitie, ... they poysoned all Italie" is another.

We can now explain the verse. While in Venice Oxford took part in Italian sports and was lured by sirens, but he was in danger of poison. Hopping Helena, that is, an arrow poisoned with eleno or belladonna, sings as it flies through the air (warbling), bearing its poisoned sting. The four noble Albanian brothers poisoned themselves at Venice, presumably with belladonna, and introduced this evil habit throughout Italy. I agree with Prof. Nelson on the next verse, which says that Oxford was summoned home by the Queen.

In conclusion, the theory that Baxter was trying to gain the patronage of the Countess of Montgomery by announcing to the world that her father had syphilis can be rejected out of hand. And a little research makes clear that the Puritan Baxter was playing up the perils caused by Oxford's sojourn in the Nation of Poisoners.

Footnotes

1. See The World of Mathematics, ed. James R. Newman (New York, 1956), iii, 1420-35.
2. John Stow, The Survey of London (London, 1987), 437.
3. Ibid., 441.
4. DNB article on Lopez. The source of this information is Bishop Godfrey Goodman's Court of James I, written in the 1650s. Goodman is considered an honest historian, but the item on Essex and Lopez could well be a baseless rumor. The point, however, is that Goodman believed it helped to explain

why Essex pursued Lopez with such ferocity; in other words, Goodman thought it plausible in his society that such a canard could cause a murderous vendetta.

5. The Statutes of the Realm (1817), 3 Edw. I c. 34, 2 Ric. II c. 5, 12 Ric. II c. 11.
6. B. M. Ward, The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford (1928), 229
7. David Cecil, The Cecils of Hatfield House (Boston, 1973), 160.
8. Queen Anna's New World of Words, or Dictionarie of the Italian and English Tongues, facsimile, the Scolar Press Limited (Menston, England, 1968).
9. John Florio, facsimile, Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Amsterdam, 1969), 183/Aa4r (there are two pages 183, the one in question follows 182, the other comes four pages later, following 178).
10. Reprint, Glasgow University Press (1905), i, 331-2.

* * * * *

OF THE SEA AND SKIES: HISTORIC HAMPTON AND ITS TIMES
(Heritage Books, Inc. 1993)
By Gene Williamson *

A history of Hampton, Virginia, the book covers a period of more than 500 years, beginning with the exploratory voyages and expeditions that led up to the colonization of Virginia at nearby Jamestown in 1607. The title is from Shakespeare, whose countrymen were the first to establish a permanent community in America. They came from the sea and settled Hampton in 1610 on the site of an Indian village...

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*A member of the Shakespeare Oxford Society.

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"Does not scholarship mean a continuous pursuit of knowledge,
the only goal (other than the very pleasure of the pursuit)
being reaching the truth?"

I graduated from Amherst College in 1924, and I read (red) Charlton Ogburn's classic ("The Mysterious William Shakespeare") in 1984 or 1985, about the time it was published. From it I learned, for the first time, of the strange conduct of the Trustees of my college, over most of the years of the 20th century, in their control of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, on the authorship issue.

In 1927 Henry Clay Folger of Brooklyn, a devoted alumnus of Amherst College, an oil multimillionaire, an avid Shakespeare scholar and collector, and an avid history buff, drafted a will in which he bequeathed funds sufficient to build and operate a Shakespeare library in Washington, which library he designated in his will as the Folger Shakespeare Memorial. I believe there is general agreement that the word "memorial" is always a word of respect, and that one thing it always connotes respect for is the truth, wherever that may lead. The will appointed "The Trustees of Amherst College and their successors in said office as Trustees of said College," as the sole entity to administer the library. Mr. Folger died in 1930, and his will was probated by the Surrogate's Court, Nassau County, New York. As far as I know, no complaint as to their conduct has ever been filed in the Court. The underlying issue, perhaps, is whether one should have been, since there have been many, many others.

At the beginning of 1995, "feeling my oats" perhaps more than I should have, I decided to make an effort with the new President of Amherst College. He is not himself an alumnus, and is a young man now holding an office the incumbent of which has always sat with the Trustees, whether or not, under the By-laws of the College, he is a member of them. His name is Tom Gerety. He began office July 1, 1994 and was "inaugurated" that fall. On February 6, 1995 I wrote him a short letter, copy of which follows:

Tom Gerety, President
Amherst College
Box 2208, Amherst College
P.O. Box 5000
Amherst, MA 01002-5000

February 6, 1995

Dear President Gerety:

As a "rank and file" Amherst graduate (1924) I have recently received, and read with great interest, the pamphlet entitled "Inauguration of the President - Amherst College - 1994". With all the good humor of the early pages I looked forward to your speech, and of course was not disappointed. You emphasized scholarship and applied it to what has become a great institution, made even greater most recently by Peter Pouncey and the Trustees

with whom he worked. No spirit antagonistic to scholarship has been permitted to prevail at the institution in Amherst, Massachusetts.

I am conscious, however, of an institution in Washington, D.C. as much under the control of the "President and Trustees of Amherst College" as the Massachusetts one. I refer of course to the Folger Shakespeare Library. I am about to send for the clause in the Henry Clay Folger will under which he bequeathed the funds for the Library's construction and maintenance, and the clause doubtless also instructs the Trustees as to operation. I expect to find scholarship emphasized there too. I am also these days reading more about the attitude of some of its staff directors whom the Amherst Trustees tolerated over the years, also some of its trustees, on the authorship issue. I hope to compile it and send it to you when finished. But I know already that much of this attitude did indeed violate scholarship.

I have before me now a copy of the letter you wrote on July 25, 1994 on this authorship subject to a friend of mine in San Diego, California. I take the broad position that neutrality and scholarship are inconsistent terms when applied to the operation of either a college or a library. Does not scholarship mean a continuous pursuit of knowledge, the only goal (other than the very pleasure of the pursuit) being reaching the truth? Does not taking a continuing stand at neutrality contradict any interest in reaching truth?

Has not any Shakespeare library the duty to treat the well-known, highly controversial authorship issue as an integral part of the very great subject it was founded to study? Is it not misguided thinking by the Amherst Trustees not to care about the identity, biography, and characteristics of the author? Should they not be joining whole-heartedly in the exciting search for the true author?

The last thing I expect to find in the Folger will is an overt instruction to the Amherst Trustees to take a neutral part in any authorship controversy. If there had been such an instruction in the will, and it had been widely publicized, I believe thousands of people would have expected "The President and Trustees of Amherst College" to decline to serve.

Sincerely,

Lincoln S. Cain

He promptly replied, within the month, by an undated longhand letter, as follows:

Dear Lincoln:

AMHERST COLLEGE
Office of the President

Thanks for your thoughtful, forceful letter. You're right about "pursuit" and "search": We have to remain open all of us - to new ideas and approaches.

What we can't do, on the Board, is micromanage all who report to us. The Folger has to pursue its own ideas - so long as they are serious and thoughtful. So take up the argument with them. Thanks for writing.

Tom

Then all spring and early summer of 1995 I collected material, corresponded with my old friend Morse Johnson, and made a new friend of Charlton Ogburn, who, I gratefully state, has found time to help me, though busy getting his brand-new condensation of "The Mysterious ——" published.

So, by early July I was ready to draft another letter to President Gerety, perhaps a longer one this time, and with copies of it and the February one and his reply to the February one, to various individual Trustees, none of whom I knew even the names of. On July 25 I mailed out the original of the following:

Tom Gerety, President
Amherst College
Box 2208, Amherst College
P.O. Box 5000
Amherst, MA 01002-5000

July 20, 1995

Dear President Gerety:

On February 6 last I wrote you a letter on the same subject as this is to be, and I enclose a copy for your ready access. You replied, in longhand, and I enclose Xerox copy of that. I am enclosing copies of this letter, my February 6 letter to you, and your reply to me, to the Secretary of the Trustees, the Chairman of the Trustees, the Chairman of the Trustees' Committee on the Management of the Folger Library, and the longest serving of the six Alumni Trustees.

The Amherst Class of 1924, of which I have been a member since the fall of 1920, and was in due course a 1924 graduated with, has only eleven members now living. Of the eleven, just to indicate the toughness of the fraternity delegation to which I belonged (Delta Upsilon, a well-behaved unit in those days) there are three of us. Not bad, when you consider there were then about twelve fraternities, each with 1924 class delegations of at least eight.

I read (red) the now-classic book on the Shakespeare authorship (The Mysterious William Shakespeare, by Charlton Ogburn - 892 pages) shortly after its publication of 1984. I learned from it, for the first time, of the highly unscholarly way the Trustees of Amherst College have been, over all the years, supervising the management of the Folger Shakespeare Library insofar as the authorship issue has been concerned. Please let me, at this early point in the letter, indulge in some literary history of full relevance. I believe it to be wholly factual, by which I mean in no way opinion-slanted. For a little over 300 years after the death of whatever sixteenth century individual wrote those superb plays, sonnets and epic poems, the orthodox support for his authorship was given to William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon. A negligible few people were from time to time supporters of various other persons, including, but not limited to, Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, Lord Derby and even Queen Elizabeth. A strong case was never made for any of them and support always was, as I say, negligible, almost to being a joke. All this changed in 1920, when a book by a till-then-unknown English school teacher (one J. Thomas Looney) revolutionized, not so much the opposition to the orthodox view, but the authorship issue itself. No longer, intellectually, were the above "possibilities" the alternatives to the Stratford man, but Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford, was the sole alternative, because of the great persuasiveness of his case when addressed to persons of free and genuine open minds. No longer was the

primary issue whether Shakespeare of Stratford could have written the plays, but whether Lord Oxford did write them. If I use the words "open mind" again in this letter, I shall always mean "free and genuine" because of course over the 300 years, now almost 400, a tremendous and overwhelming vested interest had and has become solidified in scholastic circles in favor of the orthodox view. The words "vested interest" usually connote an accumulation of financial power usable on playing fields that are not level. Here, however, we are in a purely intellectual realm (except for financial interests like the popularity of Stratford as a tourist attraction and the popularity of published books, usually biographical, following the orthodox view). An underlying characteristic in this purely intellectual realm is the presence of literally millions of scholars who believe they must retain control of public opinion on this issue and to do so use obscure methods unknown in financial circles. One motive for using them is a pride based on a need that universal scholarship must not be found so mistaken over so long a period. If universal belief in an historical event might be proved to be wrong from the beginning, is not intellectual society in precisely the same kind of predicament as it was when there was a possibility that people might believe that the earth had always gone around the sun? Human leadership demonstrated then it would fight such an idea with all its power, and people were "told" in subtle and distinct ways not to believe it. The power of the vested interest in the Shakespeare authorship is manifested in at least three specific ways that I am aware of. There must also be many that have not come to my attention. (1) The great and brilliant pioneer himself - J. Thomas Looney - the man who discovered in 1920, what no one else had, the wealth of evidence for Oxford, isn't even listed in either of the great English and American encyclopedias, the Britannica and The Americana. (2) Books in Print, the annual list of all books being published or being offered for sale in the open market, never lists the third edition of Looney's book. It is continually being republished as needed, and offered to the general public for sale. The publishers have tried and failed to understand why Books in Print fails to list it. (3) A third manifestation of the power of this vested interest is the typical reaction of people who assume an almost universal attitude of "don't bother me with that subject" toward those who commit the social error of bringing it up. The "subject" is of course innately interesting, and historically important, but for a reason which may have to remain obscure until the psychological profession solves it for us, it has become, somehow, taboo. All I know is that it happened to my wife and me once. We were attending a bar association dinner in Boston. It was before we had read those American Bar Association Journal articles later referred to. The speaker, instead of making the usual bar association speech on "Aren't we great old boys together?", embarked on the Shakespeare authorship argument, favoring Oxford. We were so disgusted we walked out. So much for the indulgence in literary history I asked for. What I have said, I think, one hundred percent factual.

Apparently Henry Clay Folger, the openness of whose mind no one doubts, dying as he did in 1930, had never heard of the 1920 pioneering book above referred to. Was he not the very kind of Shakespeare and history student who would have been fascinated by the new controversy it stirred up? (That question, Tom Gerety, I do not claim to be factual. It is put on my simple faith in its answer). Just as Folger had probably not heard of the book before 1930, I, as a college student for four of those same intervening years, did not so hear either, or later at law school, or in my private law practice years through the thirties and forties - until the 1950s when articles on

the subject began to appear in the American Bar Association Journal. I have been a devotee of Oxford since reading those articles, but it was the Ogburn book (1984) that made me ashamed, as an Amherst man, of the Folger Library and the closed-minded attitude of the Amherst Trustees.

Let me quote, in this paragraph, from the writings of Louis B. Wright, a one-time Director of the Folger (1948-1969) selected by and later tolerated by, the Trustees of my college. They were of course seeking, conscientiously, to run a Shakespeare library. But any Shakespeare library is an institution one of the primary concerns of which has to be the identity, biography, characteristics, even motivations of the man it finds, after study, to be the true author of the Shakespeare works, especially when there exists a genuine controversy over who that is. Mr. Ogburn quotes Mr. Wright (p. 154) as follows (only the quotation marks are direct Wright quotes): Those who look elsewhere than to Stratford for the author — are "disciples of cults" that "have all the flavor of religion," prey to "emotion that sweeps aside the intellectual appraisal of facts, chronology and the laws of evidence." They're "fanatic sectarians" who "rail on disbelievers and condemn other cultists as fools and knaves" and "woo a new convert to their beliefs with the enthusiasm accorded a repentant sinner at a Holy Rollers' revival" while "a fog of gloom envelops them." They have developed a "neurosis — that may account for an unhappy truculence that sometimes makes them unwelcome in polite company." Indeed, "one gets the impression that they will gladly restore the faggot and the stake for infidels from their particular orthodoxy." Does toleration of such language from a staff director a board of trustees has chosen and continues in office indicate a meager interest in scholarship on the part of that board? Wright was writing only about Oxford devotees. My point that his Board lacked interest in scholarship is itself confined to its attitude toward that same group, not its general attitude, and is intended to refer only to that time. Did it later move toward a new attitude, called neutrality?

In a letter to Mr. Ogburn, and published in his book (p. 792), Amherst Trustee Eustace Seligman, Chairman of the Trustees' committee on the management of the Folger, wrote, "The Trustees of the Folger Shakespeare Library have steadfastly refrained from in any way participating in the discussions as to the identity of the author of the plays credited to William Shakespeare." If neutrality means "not caring", is this not a gentleman's way of saying, "We don't care who wrote the plays?" Can this approach possibly be right for the trustees in charge of the country's preeminent Shakespeare library?

Good literary criticism has always deplored, even despised, the almost semi-literate attitude of people who say, "What does it matter who wrote this great book - we have the book, don't we?" The simple answer is that no one has ever understood properly the true qualities of any book without being able to identify the author and as many as possible of his or her life experiences, characteristics and motivations. Do not those of us who care for the Folger Library, as a fulfillment of the founder himself, believe in our hearts that Mr. Folger, convinced though he was at his death that 300 undisturbed years made it clear that the Stratford man wrote the plays, would have been fascinated to hear otherwise from a serious source?

In your letter to me of last February (Xerox copy enclosed) you suggested, in referring to the Folger, that it "has to pursue its own ideas - so long as they are serious and thoughtful. So take up the argument with them." I cannot read the obligations of the Amherst Trustees as narrowly as you seem to. Mr. Seligman's important statement (above) is clear that

it was the Amherst Trustees who made the authorship neutrality decision, which is of course the only issue my February 6 letter covered. In his will Mr. Folger said, "and shall keep the said library open to all students of Shakespeare under such reasonable regulations as said Trustees may from time to time adopt." I feel I must agree with Mr. Seligman in his interpretation of this clause as including the authorship issue in the scope of the Amherst Trustees' responsibility.

Also in your reply to my February 6 letter you cautioned against "micromanaging" by the Amherst Trustees. How could constant insistence on their part that the researchers at the Folger begin and continue to study hard the authorship issue at least until the day when they find the true author beyond a reasonable doubt - how could that be considered micromanaging? Of course it's the Folger's job, not the Trustees' job, but the Trustees should never allow the Folger to neglect any primary job, including authorship.

The Secretary of the Amherst Board of Trustees kindly sent me a full copy of the Folger will as probated. This was done at Dr. Gundersheimer's request. Mr. Ogburn sent me one too. Since my efforts in this project began early this year, I have met nothing but kindness everywhere, including from yourself, though we did disagree as of last February. Perhaps you have changed your own mind after further thought. When you read (read) the Folger will, if you have not already done so, you will find that it does not fail to emphasize scholarship. To whatever extent the Folger is still violating or neglecting scholarship on the authorship issue (as it surely was once doing as evidenced by Mr. Seligman's letter) to that extent the Probate Court might well criticize the Amherst Trustees for neglect of true testamentary trusteeship.

Sincerely yours,

Lincoln S. Cain

May I take the liberty of asking any Amherst man or woman who reads this strange story to write President Gerety urging him to do what he can to change the Trustees' policy. "Time is of the essence," as the heavens do seem to be falling! As for non-Amherst people, just let us discipline ourselves, please, unless of course you insist on helping us.

* * * * *

DEDICATION LETTERS TO THE EARL OF OXFORD

Edited by Katherine V. Chiljan

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LAWRENCE OF ARABIA AND THE SHAKESPEARE MYSTERY
by Tom Goff

Upon learning more about T. E. Lawrence, the man who won lasting fame as "Lawrence of Arabia" for his feats of arms in the World War I Arab Revolt, readers are often pleasantly surprised by Lawrence's elegance as an author - he did, after all, write Seven Pillars of Wisdom - and by his impressive circle of literary acquaintances. Also, Lawrence knew a thing or two about Shakespeare and the mystery surrounding him, as the following extract from a letter (June 25, 1925) indicates. In it, Lawrence addresses a close friend, the great poet and novelist Robert Graves:

Dear. R.G.

You underestimate [your] Poetic Unreason. It isn't a bit over-worked: au contraire: one of the freshest things ever written on poetics. And the matter is as good as the manner. The only place where I cavilled was the treatment of The Tempest. God knows each of us have our own fancy pictures of W[illiam]. S[hakespeare]. ...and my fancy is to have no picture of him. There was a man who hid behind his works, with great pains and consistency. Ergo he had something to hide: some privy reason for hiding. He Being a most admirable fellow, I hope he hides successfully. [Emphasis added.]

[T.E. Lawrence: The Selected Letters (p. 284). Ed. Malcolm Brown. New York: Paragon House, 1992.

As with several statements we Oxfordians use when "enlisting" noted literary experts posthumously into the Stratford doubters' ranks, use of this excerpt may require caution: Lawrence, like Coleridge*, Dickens, Tennyson, Lord Byron, and Thomas Hardy, can be quoted on both sides of the issue. This shouldn't surprise us; doubt of Shakespeare's identity often first manifests itself as an unsettled opinion. Total conviction for the anti-Stratfordian position so early in the historical debate is a somewhat rare commodity, too (though not - as The Mysterious William Shakespeare makes plain - nearly so rare an item as the Stratford orthodoxy would have us believe). Meanwhile, in recent years, we have had great success convincing others that William Shakespeare's true identity is not a matter for indifference!

Moreover, Oxfordians can certainly assemble an impressive roster of literary and other giants whose "heretical" views about Shakespeare were expressed with clarity, consistency, and power: Henry James, Mark Twain, Benjamin Disraeli, Sigmund Freud, Leslie Howard, John Galsworthy, Helen Keller, Annie Sullivan, Vladimir Nabokov, Charles Chaplin, Daphne du Maurier, and others. Here, T.E. Lawrence attests to the uncertainty, the enigmatic quality about Shakespeare's identity so often sensed by intelligent people - ever since the very decades during which the great playwright is supposed to have dominated the London theatrical world without benefit of learning, yet with such resounding mastery!

* Coleridge's famous outburst in regard to Shakespeare's supposed lack of learning ("What! are we to have miracles in sport? - Or, I speak reverently, does God choose idiots by whom to convey divine truths to man?"), from his Shakespeare's Judgment Equal To His Genius, is less

an expression of doubt in Shakespeare's identity than a defense of Shakespeare's genius, particularly from critics such as Voltaire (who thought Shakespeare a mere primitive). Charlton Ogburn (writing in The Mysterious William Shakespeare, page 285), is right to imply that Coleridge's pointed remarks should have made us think all along about the playwright's identity. In letters, and in a remarkable passage from the journal of his friend Thomas Moore, Lord Byron takes somewhat the Voltaire position: Shakespeare (whom he styles Shakspere) was a common, cunning, thieving play-broker whose best lines were stolen from others. Byron does not seem completely free from doubt, however, about the playwright's identity, and he undoubtedly did, as Ogburn (page 129) suggests, inspire the words Benjamin Disraeli put in the imaginary Lord Cadurcis' mouth (in the novel Venetia). Hardy and Tennyson made provocative statements on Shakespeare's identity (as Oxfordian Percy Allen pointed out long ago), but each also visited the Stratford monument at least once, suggesting "little question in [their minds] but that [they] were paying homage at the veritable shrine," if I may borrow Mr. Ogburn's words, in TWS, page 163, describing his own (very early) similar experience. Tennyson, who especially loved Shakespeare's play Cymbeline, is more often to be found among the "orthodox" than among the "heretics". However, compare T.E. Lawrence's statement with Dickens' "The Life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery and I tremble every day lest something should turn up."

* * * * *

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Oxford's Coronet Signature

by Diana Price

One Oxfordian theory, set forth in This Star of England by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn, and further advanced by Elisabeth Sears in Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose, holds that Edward de Vere and Queen Elizabeth married secretly in 1569. In addition, it is argued that the offspring of that union was Henry Wriothesley, the third Earl of Southampton, born in June 1574.

One of the key pieces of evidence cited for this theory is Oxford's so-called "crown signature", used from 1569 until 1603. The theory that Elizabeth and Oxford married in 1569 seeks to explain why the crown signature was adopted at that time, several years before Elizabeth's supposed confinement. Their betrothal, tantamount to marriage, or an actual marriage presumably prompted Oxford to adopt the "crown" signature. That signature is used to support the theory that he aspired to royal recognition, or secretly viewed himself as King Edward VII. I propose that proponents of this theory cannot cite the "crown signature" as evidence.

The crown signature appears in facsimile in This Star of England and Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose, as well as in William Plumer Fowler's Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters. The crux of the argument concerning the crown signature rests on the severe penalty which would attend any peer daring to incorporate the royal coat of arms, or any part of it, on their own escutcheons. The example given by Elisabeth Sears is the beheading of the Earl of Surrey, Oxford's own uncle, for quartering the royal arms with his own coat of arms. Oxford's use of the crown and seven tick marks in his signature, so the argument goes, constitutes a similarly flagrant misappropriation, and since nothing happened to Oxford as it did to Surrey, its use must have been justified. Justified, in fact, by Oxford's marriage to Elizabeth in 1569.

But Oxford's crown signature does not use the royal coat of arms. It uses a crown-like symbol. Oxford's "crown" is not, technically speaking, the royal crown. It is the coronet of earldom.

Most reference books on the peerage, and several illustrated histories of Great Britain, provide illustrations showing the coronet symbols delineating the echelons within the peerage. The illustration appearing with this article shows five variant coronets associated with different ranks. For example, the Duke's crown consists of triangular leaves emanating from the headband. The viscount's and baron's show only balls on top of the headband. The coronet for the rank of earl shows spikes, topped with little balls, emanating from the headband. That symbol matches the coronet in Oxford's crown signature.

The coronet as a symbol of the peerage turns up in a variety of formal images of the day, and those images leave no doubt that the use of the coronet was commonplace and not viewed as a usurpation of royal prerogative. In fact, it represented the royal sanctioning of the peerage itself. Most readers will be able to find one or more of the following reproductions in their personal or local libraries:

-Portrait of the Earl of Leicester, in the National Portrait Gallery, showing the coronet over the Dudley shield. Reproduced in Charlton Ogburn's The Mysterious William Shakespeare, p. 500.

-Portrait of Ferdinand Stanley, Lord Strange, showing the earl's coronet over the family shield. Reproduced in Peter Thomson's Shakespeare's Professional Career, p. 38.

-Portrait of the first Earl of Southampton, showing the earl's coronet over the coat of arms. Reproduced by A. L. Rowse in Southampton, facing p. 20.

-Portrait of Thomas Howard, 4th Duke of Norfolk and Margaret Audley, Duchess of Norfolk, reproduced in Neville William's All the Queen's Men, p. 111; Howard's coat of arms, reproduced in the same book, p. 127, shows both the ducal crown and the royal crown in the same design.

-Photograph of the statue of the 3rd Earl of Southampton in St. Peter's Church, Titchfield, showing the coronet over the coat of arms, reproduced by Irvin Leigh Matus's Shakespeare: The Living Record.

-An engraving of Charles I presiding in the House of Commons, shows rows of coats of arms, some topped with a coronet appropriate to the family's rank.

Quite obviously, if the coronet was routinely incorporated into portraiture of the day, it was a fully authorized use of the symbol. If the coronet was appropriate in a portrait, or on top of the family coat of arms, or in the family chapel, it would surely be just as appropriate in the signature of the peer.

The seven tick marks cutting through the line under Oxford's name have been proposed as an indication that he viewed himself as Edward the VII. The easier interpretation recognizes the horizontal line as indicating the number ten, so the seven ticks plus the horizontal line add up to the number 17, as in 17th Earl of Oxford, not Edward the VII.

Oxford stopped using the crown signature shortly after Elizabeth died in March 1603. The timing has been used to support Oxford's self-identification as Edward VII, a position which would presumably cease with Elizabeth's death. Oxford's last two surviving letters, dated May 7, 1603, and June 19, 1603, do not use the crown signature. In his Shakespeare Revealed in Oxford's Letters (Portsmouth: Peter E. Randall, 1986), William Plumer Fowler described Oxford's letter of June 19, 1603:

The signature, "E. Oxenforde", is underscored with the same looped trefoil design as in his immediately preceding letter of May 7, 1603. These last two underscorings differ radically from the spair-like line with the seven crossmarks which underscore his signature in all his earlier letters subsequent to his 1563 French one.

But Oxford signed at least one surviving letter with the crown signature after Elizabeth's death. Again according to Fowler, he signed with it in a letter dated April 25-7, 1603. Oxford discontinued using the crown signature as of May 7. There is therefore no precise correlation between Elizabeth's death and his discontinuation of the crown signature. Any attribution of motive to Oxford's change of signature is speculation.

The reasonable conclusion is that the crown signature, more appropriately called the "coronet signature", was a symbol proclaiming Oxford's rank as the 17th Earl. If so, it is not evidence in support of the Tudor Rose theory.

Coronets of the Peerage



Duke



Viscount



Marquess



Baron



Earl

Coronet: A small or inferior crown, spec. a crown denoting a dignity inferior to that of the sovereign, worn by the nobility, and varying in form according to rank.

The OED

Caesar: I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown; yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets;

Julius Caesar, I.ii.233-4

2 Gent: Is that old noble lady, Duchess of Norfolk.
1 Gent: It is, and all the rest are countesses.

2 Gent: Their coronets say so.

Henry VIII, IV.i.52-4

LETTERS COLUMN

I

In the Spring 1995 Newsletter (Vol. 31, Vol. No. 2B) Peter R. Moore congratulated Professor Alan R. Nelson for "Oxford in Venice: New Light on an Old Question" with six pages for discovering new material on the Earl of Oxford, namely the poetry of Nathaniel Baxter. However, I must disagree with his interpretation of the meaning of the second verse of Baxter's acrostic poem to Oxford's daughter, the Countess of Montgomery. Prof. Nelson argues that Oxford caught syphilis in Italy in 1575 or 76, and Baxter said so in these lines:

Never omitting what might pastime bring,
Italian sports, and Syren's Melodie:
Hopping Helena with her warbling sting,
Infested th'Albanian dignitie.
Like as they poysoned all Italie.

My disagreement has two causes. First, it would have been utterly unthinkable for Baxter to say that Oxford had syphilis in a dedicatory poem to Oxford's daughter, from whom Baxter was hoping for a gratuity. Second, the last three lines of this verse clearly refer to poisoning rather than to venereal disease.

Dear Morse:

July 14, 1995

I enjoyed your inclusion in the Spring Newsletter of the Oxford in Venice: New Light on an Old Question by Professor Alan H. Nelson, and the response by Peter Moore. For what it is worth, the response is far more convincing, at least in this corner of Appalachia.

However, I would like to suggest another possibility for Oxford's diagnosis, which seems even less strained than that of Moore. The "Hopping Helena with her warbling sting, infested the Albanian dignitie, Like as they poysoned all Italie." suggests that rather than poisoned arrows, he is referring to the Anopheles mosquito.

The author of the piece on malaria in the Eleventh Edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica states, "An old popular belief current in different countries, and derived from common observation, connected mosquitoes with malaria, and from time to time this theory found support in more scientific quarters on general grounds, but it lacked demonstration and attracted little attention."

So there we have it. I would like respectfully to suggest that Oxford had a disease common in Italy (Like as they poysoned all Italie). Untreated, it runs its course, but then tends to recur, sometimes annually. This fits perfectly with Charles Arundel's statement that Oxford "hathe a yerelie celebration of the Neapolitan maladye."

Back to Hopping Helena -- we have all heard mosquitoes "warble", and we have all felt their "sting". And if all of Italy were struck with poisoned arrows, surely there would have been a rapid depopulation, as opposed to endemic disease.

Countess Montgomery would hardly be ashamed of her dashing father having acquired a common tropical disease. Baxter could hope for his benefice, and we do not have to wonder how the fair Susan escaped congenital syphilis. Nor do we have to wonder how a man with tertiary syphilis could have written Shakespeare. I really find no symptoms of general paresis anywhere. Do you?

You probably heard from half the doctors in the Society on this subject--some even with footnotes. I just had to let you have my thoughts, for what they are worth.

Yours for E.Ver,
Gregg
Francis G. Horne, M.D.

Dear Morse:

3 August 1995

I saw Prof. Nelson two days ago at the Folger and gave him xeroxes of your letter and of Gregg Horne's.

Dr. Horne's idea about malaria is the first thing that came to my mind when Nelson showed me Baxter's poem. But I decided that it was highly unlikely that Baxter was 300 years ahead scientific knowledge, or expect his readers to be. Besides, Baxter's poem is about dramatic, exciting events, and I don't think malaria or some other fever fits in that category.

But Nelson and I have had our say, so Dr. Horne should get his. I think the "Letters Column" is a great idea.

Peter Moore

II

Dear Morse Johnson:

10 June 1995

Like you, I have read the book on Shakespeare by Irvin Matus. You will not be surprised to learn that I thought his book more sensible than you found it. On the other hand, perhaps you will be surprised to discover that my one large misgiving with Matus was the same as yours: that he neglected to address the supposed parallels between Oxford's life and the Shakespearean plays anywhere nearly as fully as he should have. I, for example, was disappointed that he failed even to mention the Gad's Hill coincidence, which I consider by far the most peculiar parallel between Oxford's life and a Shakespeare play (although the parallel is strongest in a play some claim was a predecessor of Shakespeare's Henry IV and V plays, and not clearly in the oeuvre.) Most of the other parallels seem pretty minor to me, and/or easy to explain without having to revert to the hypothesis that Oxford wrote the plays.

For instance, it would seem likely that Edmund Campion's words at his trial were disseminated among the Catholics of the time, and were consequently available even to interested non-Catholics. Or Shakspeare could have known Munday, or someone else with knowledge of the trial -- even Oxford. I continue, incidentally, to think it would be most interesting to consider the possibility that Shakspeare WAS the writer of the plays but that Oxford was his mentor; I don't expect you to like that idea, but it would certainly explain a few minor items.

There are also a host of anti-parallels in the plays -- for example, the times in the plays' twins are important though neither Shakspeare nor Oxford was a twin ... but, I recall as I write this, Shakspeare WAS the father of twins, which proves only he could have written The Comedy of Errors and Twelfth Night, right?

Be that as it may, the main reason for my letter is not to argue whether or not the parallels count for anything, but to make what I consider to be

an important scholarly suggestion. It has to do with our current ignorance as to exactly how much weight to give parallels of the sort you Oxfordians are finding in the plays (e.g., Hamlet loses his father prematurely as does Oxford). Your side claims these parallels are significant, ours that they are not, but neither really has any evidence to support its case -- because (as far as I know) there has been no systematic study done concerning how much a given dramatist's plays should literally reflect his life, or how much a given author's plays might, by chance, reflect the life of someone other than the author.

Specifically, should we expect the Shakespearean plays literally to reflect the life of their author? This is a question that can be decided, or at least illuminated, outside the limited Authorship Question. Certain studies would need to be done that compared the known lives of various playwrights during Shakspeare's time with the plots of their plays. Obviously a similar comparison between the works and lives of later playwrights will be needed as well due to the lack of information on the lives of most Elizabethan playwrights. How clearly autobiographical, for instance, are Bernard Shaw's plays? Oscar Wilde's?

Conversely, a study ought to be done on how much of Oxford's life is reflected in non-Shakespearean Elizabethan plays. Also how much of the life of any aristocratic contemporary of Oxford's is reflected in Shakespeare's, or some other Elizabethan's, plays. If it could be shown, say, that Rutledge's life is reflected by the Shakspeare plays as much as Oxford's, it would be a blow to the Oxford case. But the size of what is known about each person's life is important. The life of a man like Shakspeare, about whom little is known, is not going to parallel events in any set of the plays as much as the life of a man like Oxford, about whom much more is known.

Also relevant would be a conscientious inventory of sources for a given play with a view to finding out what parallels can be assigned to them rather than to the play's author. Clearly, for example, that The Comedy of Errors dealt with twins could have little to do with its author's having possibly fathered twins, or having been a twin, since life-circumstances influence what sources he chooses might be an interesting question to pursue.)

My own impression is that almost nothing of Marlowe's life is reflected in his plays -- except, of course, his general view of life. That Ben Jonson's plays have to do with the middle classes that he grew up in is undebatable, and some of what he wrote connected with the literary wars he got into, but I don't think he ever pulled scams like the main characters of Volpone and The Alchemist.

Another problem for your side is that parallels can only be suggestive, never conclusive -- since many authors use material from other people's lives, which means that even if Hamlet turns out to be a dead-ringer for Oxford, it might only indicate that Shakspeare was inspired by what he'd heard of the life of Oxford in taverns, perhaps from Munday, to base his man on him.

This letter and my suggestions are not as crisply clear as I'd like them to be, nor as neutral. I hope you follow my drift, though, and that it makes some sense. If parallels are consequential, people like me need evidence to show why; we can't just accept someone's verdict that they ARE consequential. Until the Oxfordians come up with some kind of statistical basis for their view that parallels between the plot of Shakspeare's plays and Oxford's life are too numerous to be mere coincidence, that view will persuade no one but the uncritical.

Sincerely,

Bob Grumman

Dear Bob Grumman:

June 20, 1995

I received your June 10/95 letter in which you reject the "supposed parallels between Oxford's life and the Shakespearean plays anywhere nearly as he should have. (you refer to) the Gad's Hill coincidence ...most of the other parallels seem pretty minor to me, and/or easy to explain without having to revert to the hypothesis that Oxford wrote the plays."

I enclose a copy of the first three pages of Chapter 18 (pp. 350-372) of The Mysterious William Shakespeare (EPM Publications, Inc. McLean, Virginia 1992 by Charlton Ogburn).

I consider your letter and answering by the whole Chapter 18 of The Mysterious William Shakespeare would make an intriguing and informing Summer 1995 Newsletter Vol. 31 No. 3. I would, of course, not print if you do not accept. Let me know one way or the other by August 1, 1995.

Sincerely,
Morse Johnson

Dear Morse Johnson:

22 June 1995

I'm pleased that you think my letter worth publishing in your newsletter. You certainly have my permission -- although I have to admit that I'm a little intimidated by the thought of having Charlton Ogburn have back at me! If you do print my letter, please change all my references to Shakespeare of Stratford to "Shakspeare", as I've tried to go along with the Shakespeare convention, for clarity's sake, but spelled my man's name "Shakespeare" in two places and might have gotten it wrong elsewhere, as well.

It'd also be nice, though not necessary, if you or someone else, could respond in print to my suggestion that statistical studies are needed of the autobiographical content of other plays besides Shakespeare's, which I don't think Ogburn discusses in his book.

Incidentally, Have you seen the fairly recent publication of the early seventeenth-century play, Cardenio, in an edition edited by a handwriting expert who believes that both the manuscript copy of the play that is extant and Shakspeare's will were written by Shakespeare? I've read the book, which has an extensive commentary, and decided Cardenio was not good enough to have been written by Shakespeare, although it strikes me as good as Timon of Athens, and fail to find the handwriting expert's evidence and arguments that persuasive. But he does make a few interesting points. I'd love to see what your side makes of his book.

Surely, by the way, that the book's thesis has not been accepted by the Stratfordian establishment even though it would in one swoop prove beyond doubt that Shakspeare was Shakespeare shows that the Stratfordians have some principles; on the other hand, maybe it's too tenuous even for them. In any event, it's interesting.

All best,
Bob Grumman

Dear Bob Grumman:

Sept. 20, 1995

In the last paragraph of your June 10/95 letter to me you proclaim:

Until the Oxfordians come up with some kind of statistical basis for their view that parallels between the plot of Shakespeare's plays and Oxford's life are too numerous to be mere coincidence, that view will persuade no one but the uncritical.

The "statistical basis" for parallels between Shakespeare's plays is validated by Charlton Ogburn in the following quotation on pp. 254-255 in The Mysterious William Shakespeare:

Shakespeare "was an aristocratic born...and felt in himself a kinship for the courtesies, chivalries, and generousness of aristocratic life," Frank Harris observes. "Everybody has noticed the predilection with which he lends such characters [as Bassanio, Benedick and Mercutio] his own poetic spirit and charm. His lower orders are all food for comedy or farce; he will not treat them seriously." That it apparently never occurred to Harris to question Shakespeare's identification as the Stratford man is astonishing.

It has certainly occurred to Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, who has referred to Shakespeare as "whoever he was." We have already heard him enlarge upon Shakespeare's aristocratic outlook. He goes on:

The independent, sub-noble world of artisans and craftsman, if it exists for Shakespeare, exists only as his butt, Bottom, Quince, Snug, Dogberry and Verges, Dull - these poor imbeciles are used only to amuse the nobility by their clumsiness. Even the middle classes are scarcely better treated.

A century ago, Walt Whitman made the same point, coming to a rather quaint conclusion about it. He remarked that Shakespeare's:

...low characters, mechanics, even the loyal henchmen - all in themselves nothing - serve as capital foils to the aristocracy. The comedies, (exquisite as they certainly are) bringing in admirably portray'd characters, have the unmistakable hue of plays, portraits, made for the divertisement only of the elite of the castle, and from its point of view. The comedies are altogether non-acceptable to America and Democracy.

In this connection, Louis P. Benezet draws an interesting contrast between Shakespeare and Jonson:

As one reads the plays of these two greatest dramatists of the Elizabethan-Jacobean era, one is immediately struck by a great contrast between them. One is aristocratic, the other bourgeois. The noblemen of one author are natural, at ease, convincing. They talk the language of their class, both in matter and manner. They are aristocrats to the core. On the other hand in portraying the lower classes Shakespeare is unconvincing. He makes them clods or dolts or clowns, and has them amuse us by their gaucheries. He gives them undignified names, Wart, Bullcalf, Mouldy. Bottom, Dogberry, Snout, etc. Only occasionally does Shakespeare hold up a gentleman to ridicule, as he does with Slender and Aguecheek, said by Professor Dowden to represent the same person, a sentiment strongly seconded by certain Oxfordians, who see Philip Sidney as the original.

On the other hand, Jonson's bourgeois characters are natural, while his nobles are caricatures. They bear the same kind of names that Shakespeare gives to his commoners: Sir Paul Eitherside, Sir Amorous La-Foole, Sir Epicure Mammon, Lady Haughty, Sir Diaphanous Silkworm, etc.

There is always a strong tendency on the part of the English writers from the upper middle class to be resentful of the attitude assumed toward them by the titled nobility. It is characteristic of Ben

Jonson. He has no sympathy with aristocrat aloofness and superiority.

On the other hand, Shakespeare is the natural aristocrat. He never has to think to make his characters of gentle blood act their parts. They do so as naturally as they breathe.

Until the Stratfordians, including yourself, come up with some kind of statistical basis that explains how and why Will Shakspeare was consistently like "William Shakespeare", a natural aristocrat, and consistently ridiculed the low characters and plebians, they must reject Will Shakspeare as "William Shakespeare".

If there are any other disputations, they will be printed in the forthcoming Newsletter.

Sincerely,
Morse Johnson

* * * * *

MICHAEL YORK JOINS SOCIETY

Veteran British actor Michael York has become one of the latest persons to join The Shakespeare Oxford Society, membership chairman Len Deming has announced. York's membership application had been received in July but it was only recently the Society realized that the "Michael York" on the application and the popular actor were one and the same. York makes his home in Los Angeles with his wife, Pat.

The Oxford theory "...is the only solution that makes any sense," said York, a graduate of Oxford University who has appeared in numerous Shakespearean productions on stage and in film. He played Hamlet on stage in London in 1970 to critical acclaim and his many film credits include the roles of Tybalt in Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet (1967) and Lucentio in The Taming of the Shrew opposite Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Other films include Cabaret (1971) with Liza Minelli, The Three Musketeers (1973) with Raquel Welch, Logan's Run (1975) with Peter Ustinov, The Last Remake of Beau Geste (1976) with Marty Feldman and The Long Shadow (1991) with Liv Ullmann.

York said that he did not see himself as a spokesman for the Society, describing himself as a "neophyte". However, his exposure to Shakespeare and the Tudor Rose, a book written by former Society president Elisabeth Sears, convinced him to join. He had been sent a membership brochure by Dr. Lydia Bronte of New York, who is also a member of the Society's Board of Trustees and whom York describes as a friend.

Saying that he was curious, like anyone else, York stated, "I find it fascinating. Knowing something about the person who actually wrote these incredible works gives a completely different perspective. I very much look forward to being an Oxfordian." Referring to one of the books on the subject which he is reading, he said, "The argument seems irrefutable." He also said that he plans to attend the Society's Annual Meeting to be held in Greensboro, North Carolina at the end of September if his schedule permits and has tentatively been pencilled in to address those attending at the Friday night dinner.

Several actors of note have expressed an interest in the "authorship question", including Sir John Gielgud and Kenneth Branagh. However, York is the first such actor to actually join the American society.

THE LANE STORYTELLER, POOR AND DESPISED
By Peter R. Moore

This article discusses several items unearthed by Professor Alan H. Nelson of the University of California, Berkeley in his ongoing examination and transcription of all documents written by or directly about the Earl of Oxford. I gratefully acknowledge Prof. Nelson's permission to use this material.

The article will start by showing that a description of Oxford made in 1581 precisely matches Ben Jonson's well-known description of Shakespeare's runaway wit. It will then be shown that Oxford was lame during the latter part of his life, matching Shakespeare's lameness as mentioned in Sonnets 37 and 89. We will see that orthodox scholars reject a literal meaning of "lame" for a very valid reason, namely, that Shakespeare calls himself 'poor, lame, and despised', which attributes do not fit what we know about Shakespeare of Stratford. But all three qualities fit Oxford, and we will close with a description of him in 1603 as lame, despised, and poor.

I Runaway Wit

The first item of interest is an extract from a libel made against Oxford by Charles Arundel in late January 1581 or soon thereafter, which begins: "A trew declaracion of the Earell of oxfordes detestable vicees, and vnpure life." Arundel, who went on to become the principal author of the most notorious libel of the age, Leicester's Commonwealth, had been placed under arrest for treasonable activities in December 1580 and was trying to destroy the credibility of his accuser, Oxford. His 'Declaration' accuses Oxford of five categories of evil, to wit, "impudent, and sencelesse lies", notorious drunkenness, homosexuality, hired murders, and
ffiftlie to shewe, that the worell [i.e., world] never brought
forthe suche a villonous Monster, and for a partinge blow to geve
him his full payment, I will prove against him, his most horrible
and detestable blasphemy in deniall of the devinitie of Christ
...

As Arundel tells it, Oxford's impudent and senseless lies were tall tales concerning his travels in Flanders, France, and Italy. Arundel's previous libel cited such monstrous untruths as that Oxford maintained that St. Mark's Cathedral at Venice was paved with diamonds and rubies, while the cobblers' wives at Milan were more richly dressed every working day than was Queen Elizabeth at Christmas. But in the libel under consideration, Arundel limits himself to Oxford's Munchausen-like war stories, "as heretofore they have made much sporte to the hereers". Arundel claimed that Oxford said that he so impressed the famous Duke of Alva in Flanders that Alva (who had departed the year before Oxford's visit) placed him in command of all the King of Spain's forces in the Low Countries, where he accomplished such mighty feats that his fame spread to Italy. And so, when Oxford traveled to Italy, the Pope gave him an army of 30,000 men to intervene in a civil war in Genoa. Having related these matters, Arundel seems unconsciously to drop his guard in wonder, continuing [my emphasis]:

this lie is verry rife w[i]t[h] him and in it he glories greatlie,
diverslie hathe he told it, and when he enters into it, he can
hardlie owte, whiche hathe made suche sporte as often have I bin
driven to rise from his table laugheinge so hathe my L[ord] Charles
Howard [of Effingham], and the rest, whome I namid before and for

the profe of this I take them all as wittnises [the witnesses included Lords Windsor, Compton, Henry Howard, and Thomas Howard, as well as Walter Raleigh.]

Arundel is telling us that Oxford was a marvelously imaginative storyteller, who could tell the same tale over and over to the same audience, convulsing them with laughter every time. But in the passage, "and when he enters into it, he can hardly out", Arundel describes a personal characteristic emphasized by Ben Jonson in his description of Shakespeare. Having remarked that the actors praised Shakespeare as having never blotted a line, Jonson said that Shakespeare should have blotted out a thousand, meaning that he let himself get carried away with his wit, not knowing when to stop. Jonson elaborated:

Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent Phantasie; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein hee flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd: Sufflaminandus erat; [i.e., he needed a brake] as Augustus said of Haterius. His wit was in his owne power; would the rule of it had beene so too. Many times hee fell into those things, could not escape laughter: (Herford & Simpson, 8, 583-4)

So Jonson describes a characteristic of Shakespeare that is identical to what Arundel said of Oxford -- that once he turned his wit on, he was unable to turn it off. But we should also note the emphatic nature of Arundel's and Jonson's comments, as indicating that the personal quality in question was a most salient feature of the man being described. Arundel is spewing forth a carefully organized blast of slander, driven by a desire for revenge, as well as to discredit Oxford's accusations against him. But then, weakening the force of his own slander, he depicts Oxford's storytelling ability, as if he is simply unable to get over that aspect of Oxford. And Jonson, ironically, commits the same fault he criticizes in Shakespeare, being unable to let go of his idea until he has said it four different ways: "wherein he flowed ... Sufflaminandus erat ... His wit was in his owne power ... Many times hee fell ... "

II Lame

We will now turn to Prof. Nelson's transcription of Oxford's letters from 1590 to 1603. Oxford states that he is unable to get about for reasons of bad health or infirmity in letters of September 1590 (Fowler, 378), March 1595 (Salisbury, 5, 158), August 1595 (Fowler, 496), September 1597 (Fowler, 524), October 1601 (Fowler, 593), and April 1603 (Fowler, 739), but he does not specify the nature of his ailment(s). However, in a letter to his father-in-law, Lord Burghley, dated 25 March 1595, Oxford writes: "I will attend yowre Lordship as well as a lame man may at yowre house" (extract in Salisbury, 5, 154; this quote from Prof. Nelson). On 22 November 1601 Oxford wrote to his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Cecil, closing, "thus desyring yow to beare w[i]th the weaknes of my lame hand, I take my leaue" (Fowler, 607; this quote from Prof. Nelson). And in January 1602 he wrote again to Cecil, noting, "thus wythe a lame hand, to wright I take my leue" (Fowler, 653).

Shakespeare's Sonnet 37 contains these lines:

So I, made lame by Fortune's dearest spite,

3

.....

So then I am not poor, lame, nor despised,

9

Sonnet 89 returns to this theme: "Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt" (3).

Recent editors of the Sonnets insist that the obvious conclusion that the poet might literally have been lame cannot possibly be true, but they cannot be bothered to give the modern reader good arguments to support their ideology. W.G. Ingram and Theodore Redpath's 1964 edition begins its notes on Sonnet 37 by sneering at the idea that the lame poet is someone other than the Stratfordian, and then goes on to explain that the word "lame" can be taken metaphorically. Ingram and Redpath imply that the existence of a figurative meaning excludes the possibility of a literal reading. John Kerrigan's 1986 edition makes that same argument.

Stephen Booth's 1978 edition of the Sonnets is notable for exceeding all others in finding an absurdly large number of multiple meanings in Shakespeare's words. As Kerrigan puts it, Booth works on the "principle that any extractable meaning is significant" (65). But when he comes to Sonnets 37 and 89, Booth will allow "lame" to have only one meaning — the poet is apologizing for his poor meter. Booth offers five examples of poets using "lame", "limping", or "halting" to indicate bad meter, examples which utterly disprove Booth's interpretation of Shakespeare's words. To add a sixth example, John Donne begins the poem "To Mr. T.W.": "Haste thee harsh verse as fast as thy lame measure/Will give thee leave". As with Donne, all five of Booth's examples apply the modifier "lame/limping/halting" to the poet's verse, not to the poet himself. In no case does a poet write "I am lame", expecting readers to understand the words as an apology for bad meter.

Now it is perfectly true that words can have both literal and figurative meanings, as well as special meaning within the conventions of poetry. But Ingram and Redpath, Booth, and Kerrigan fail to give us a valid reason for not taking Shakespeare's words literally.

Older editors of the Sonnets showed more respect for their readers' intelligence. Hyder Rollins' 1944 New Variorum edition offers in its notes to 37 this quotation from Edmond Malone's edition of 1790:

If the words are to be understood literally, we must then suppose that ... [Sh.] was also poor and despised, for neither of which suppositions there is the smallest ground.

Rollins also makes this argument concerning line 9 of Sonnet 37:

Literalists might note that, even if he was lame, Sh. could not have been poore, for he had jewels which ([Sonnet] 48.1-5), during his absences from London, he put in a sort of safe-deposit vault.

Now here is good sense. Malone and Rollins are telling us that the author of Sonnets 37 and 89 does not match what we know of William Shakespeare of Stratford, who became quite well-to-do from a modest beginning, and who could hardly be said to be poor if he owned jewels of value, as indicated in Sonnet 48. But the author of these Sonnets certainly matches what is known of the Earl of Oxford, who was never in real poverty, but who was disgracefully poor for an earl.

III Poor and Despised

Owing to extravagant habits and unlucky financial speculations, Oxford was forced to sell most of his inherited lands by 1585 (Ward, 353). In 1586 the Queen granted him an annual pension of 1,000 pounds, to continue "until such time as he shall be by Us otherwise provided for to be in some manner relieved" (Ward, 257). After Oxford's death in 1604, his widow and son received a much smaller pension from King James. She petitioned that the annuity be raised to 500 pounds a year, noting:

The pension of 1,000 pounds was not given by the late Queen to my Lord for his life and then to determine [i.e., cease], but to continue the Queen might raise his decay by some better provision. (Salisbury, 16, 258)

Elsewhere in the letter, she referred to her "ruined estate ... desolate estate ... greate distresse ... miserable estate" (copy of original letter from Matus, 261).

About the same time, James was having to fend off a debt-ridden baron who felt that a grant of 1,000 pounds a year was too small. The King commented, "Great Oxford when his [e]state was whole ruined got no more of the late Queen" (Salisbury, 16, 397). Some time after Oxford's death, Sir George Buck, Master of the Revels, made a note on Oxford's magnificence, learning, and religion, adding that in the promise of his youth Oxford seemed "much more life to raise ... a new earldom, than to decay ... waste & lose an old earldom" (Miller, 394).

So we know that Oxford was poor as well as lame, and we also know that he was despised accordingly. When Queen Elizabeth was dying, the Earl of Lincoln tried to enlist Oxford in some scheme of opposition to King James. Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, found out about Lincoln's activities, but failed to report them. Peyton excused himself for this dereliction by saying that he took the matter seriously until he found out that Lincoln's alleged accomplice was Oxford, on whom Peyton passed this verdict (my emphasis):

I knewe hym to be so weake in boddy, in frends, in habyltye, and all other means to rayse any combustyon in that state, as I never feered any danger to proseyd from so feeble a fowndation. (O'Connor, 107)

Peyton's words merit a close inspection. He calls Oxford weak in body, a reference to that infirmity cited in Oxford's letters that led him to describe himself as "lame". Peyton next notes that Oxford lacked friends, which is a way of saying that he was despised or looked down on (OED). Peyton then says that Oxford lacked "ability ... to raise ... combustion in the state", which, in the context of potential for raising insurrection, means OED def. 4 of 'ability': "Pecuniary power; wealth, estate, means". Or, in other words, Peyton is saying that Oxford was poor. And there we have it -- lame, despised, and poor.

Shakespeare also frequently laments the fact that he is old in the Sonnets, which would be appropriate coming from Oxford. He says that his career has brought him shame and disgrace by virtue of his association with the public stage in Sonnets 110 and 111, and by his literary career in Sonnet 72. Such matters would hardly have brought disgrace to Shakspeare of Stratford. Shakespeare alludes to life at Court in several Sonnets, especially 125. He repeatedly castigates the highborn friend to whom the first 126 sonnets are addressed, something not done by poets of humble origins to their patrons back then. And when the Sonnets appeared in print in 1609, the publisher's dedication referred to the author as "OVR.EVER-LIVING.POET"--unambiguously meaning that he was dead (see Endnote). Oxford died in 1604, Shakspeare in 1616.

IV Conclusion

In conclusion, when we match Ben Jonson's description of Shakespeare's runaway wit to what we know of the phantom from Stratford-on-Avon, we find nothing to work with. But when we match that description to what Charles Arundel said about the Earl of Oxford, we get a perfect fit. When we match

Shakespeare's words in Sonnets 37 and 89 to what we know of the affluent burgher of Stratford, we find such a misfit that orthodox scholars must take on of two courses. Either they twist Shakespeare's meaning into something no sensible reader can accept, or else, as with Malone and Rollins, they tell us that Shakespeare's autobiographical words cannot apply to Master Shakspeare of Stratford. This latter explanation we can very well accept, especially when we discover that the Earl of Oxford was 'poor, lame, and despised'. Moreover, the author of the Sonnets indicates that he is old, shamed by his literary and theatrical career, and a courtier of high enough station to sharply criticize his aristocratic friend, while his publisher said that he was dead by 1609.

Both Oxford and the author Shakespeare were superb tellers of imaginative stories, possessed of a runaway wit, and they were poor, lame, and despised. Furthermore, Oxford matches the author of Shakespeare's Sonnets on a number of other points where the Stratford man does not fit. The odds against such similarity resulting from sheer coincidence are formidably long.

Endnote on "ever-living". In 1926 Col. B.R. Ward published a list of twenty-three examples of use of the term "ever-living", compiled from concordances and major dictionaries (Miller, 211-14). All of the examples refer to deities, abstractions, and dead people. I would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on Col. Ward's work.

No scholar of the Stratford persuasion has found a single example of "ever-living" being applied to a living person, though at least one of them tried. Prof. Donald W. Foster writes:

In a fairly extensive search, I have not found any instance of ever-living used in a Renaissance text to describe a living mortal, including, even, panegyrics on Queen Elizabeth, where one should most expect to find it -- though it does appear sometimes in eulogies for the dead ("Master W.H., R.I.P.", PMLA 102, 1: 46.)

Miller's version of Ward's list contains an error. The example printed as:

In that he is man, he received life from the Father as the foundation of that everliving Deity Hooker (1593).

Should read:

In that he is man, he received life from the Father as from the fountain of that ever living Deity, which is the Person of the Word

Hooker's Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, V, lvi, 4 (1593).

In the meantime, I have encountered a few more examples. Henry Brinklow's 1542 Complaynt of Roderyck Mors and The Lamentacyon of a Christen agaynst the Cytie of London (Early English Text Society, Extra Series, 1874, no. 22) use the term "everlyving God" six times (53, 56, 76, 93, 94, 98). The statute 1 Mary I, St. 2, c. 1 has the phrase, "wee beseeche Thalmightye and ever lyving God" (The Statutes of the Realm, IV, 200). I have also seen this term in the preambles of some of the acts of Henry VIII, but I did not make note of them. The anonymous 1591 Troublesome Raigne of King John includes:

Thus hath K. Richards Sonne performde his vowes.
And offered Austrias bloud for sacrifice

Unto his fathers everliving soule. (VI, 1044-46)

Gabriel Harvey's 1592 Sonnett XIII in Four Letters and Certaine Sonnets provides a variant usage of particular interest as showing clearly that "live

ever" meant "dead" if applied to a human being. The sonnet appeals to Fame on behalf of ten recently deceased knights (the Bacon in question being Sir Nicholas), beginning:

Live ever valourous renowned Knightes;
Live ever Smith, and Bacon, Peerles men:
Live ever Walsingham, and Hatton wise:
Live ever Mildmayes honorable name.
Ah, that Sir Humphry Gilbert should be dead:
Ah, that Sir Philip Sidney should be dead:

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* * * * *

Excerpt from
EDWARD DE VERE, Seventeenth Earl Of Oxford
THE REAL SHAKESPEARE

by
William Kent and others (3rd Edition, 1966)
The Shakespearean Authorship Society

Of the thousands of people who annually visit Stratford-on-Avon, as pilgrims to a religious shrine, how many could give a reason for the faith that is in them? It would be a generous estimate to say one per cent. The rest, if asked why they thought our greatest literary genius lived in that small country town, would probably say they had been so taught at school; they had always understood it was so; they had read it in a book.

Yet there is really only one reference in Stratford - in marble or manuscript - to connect William Shakspeare of Stratford with the art of writing; this is the strange epitaph on the monument in the Church: the date and author are unknown:

"Stay passenger, why goest thou by so fast
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast
Within this monument, Shakspeare, with whome
Quick nature died whose name doth deck the tombe
Far more than cost: sith all that he hath writt,
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt."

"Read if thou can'st," suggests some enigma, and any evidence this eulogy may be held to afford is cancelled by the entire absence of allusion in the archives of the town to his being more than ordinary citizen. It is significant that there is no record of Stratford having honoured its greatest son by performing even a single play in his lifetime or indeed for a considerable period after his death! From the record of his career in Stratford and London he appears as an astute man of business; in no wise a literary genius. Of the amazing biographies that have been written despite the documentary evidence (or lack of it) we may well ask, "How build such solid fabric out of air?"

His father and mother could not write their own names. Their son William may have gone to the grammar school. If there was free admission (on the ground that his father was an Alderman) it is likely enough that the latter, though himself illiterate, would think it worth while to send his son. There is, however, no evidence that he was in any way regarded as a scholar. The Stratford school does not seem to have paid any regard to this remarkable "old boy" until the latter part of the eighteenth century. Then he may be said to have owed more to David Garrick* than to Stratford.

Very little is known of his early manhood. his marriage took place - no one knows where - towards the end of 1582, and the parish register of Stratford records the baptism of a daughter, Susanna, on 26th May, 1583, and twins, Hamnet and Judith, on 2nd February, 1585. As the late Sir Edmund Chambers drily remarked: "Children can be baptized but not begotten without a father, and it is reasonable to suppose that Shakespeare was still in Stratford during 1584."

The earliest clue we have to his life in London is Robert Greene's cryptic allusion in 1592 to "an upstart Crow ... (who) is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a country". To quote Chambers once more: "We have therefore a very considerable hiatus in his history, extending over a maximum of eight years from 1584 to 1592, to take into account ... Whatever imprint Shakespeare's Warwickshire contemporaries may have left upon his imagination inevitably eludes us. The main fact in his early career is still that unexplored hiatus, and who shall say what adventures, material and spiritual, six or eight crowded Elizabethan years may have brought him. It is no use guessing. As in many other historical investigations, after all the careful scrutiny of clues and all the patient balancing of possibilities, the last word of a self-respecting scholarship can only be that of nescience."

Nevertheless, many "orthodox" Stratfordians are still following in the steps of Sir Sidney Lee, whose "Life of Shakespeare" consisted largely of conjectures prefaced by such words as "We may suppose", "doubtless" and the like. Some have even found in the plays a clear picture of "pura Warwickshire landscape", showing that the author was of that county!

Others assign several of his years, during the fifteen-eighties, to a lawyer's office as a junior clerk, in the hope of accounting for the considerable knowledge of law shown in the Plays and Sonnets. Another accounts for his knowledge of war and soldiering by sending him to the Low Countries in 1585-6 with the Earl of Leicester's expedition.

Yet others make him change his name to Shakeshafte and spend several of those years in a company of players run by Alexander Houghton and later by Sir Thomas Hesketh in Lancashire. While Dover Wilson sends him to Italy in 1593-4 as confidential adviser and tutor to the Earl of Southampton. The hopelessly varied "programme" for the period seems to continue, unchecked, the "We may suppose" tradition of Sir Sidney Lee. There is apparently no limit to what can be crowded into six or eight Elizabethan years.

And now - to crowd the period still more - modern orthodox criticism is "pushing back" the dates of writing of the Sonnets and many of the Plays into the fifteen-eighties.

*Editor's Note: In 1769 David Garrick arranged to stage a presentation in Stratford of a cast in the London's Westminster's statue of William Shakespeare, as Charlton Ogburn in his The Mysterious William Shakespeare a century and a half after his death, Will Shakspeare had finally and fully arrived.

He went to London - no one knows when - and we are asked to assume that this young man from Stratford, with no backing and no influence, had the audacity to dedicate two remarkable poems, Venus and Adonis and Lucrece, in 1593 and 1594, to Henry Wriothesley, the Earl of Southampton, and later - in the Sonnets - audaciously to implore him to marry and beget children, despite the fact that the latter's biographers have been unable to trace any connection between the two! This same singular young man published quarto editions of such plays as Richard II and Romeo and Juliet so modestly that he omitted his name from the title pages. Yet, as the orthodox Churton Collins remarked, "To a young novice on his probation as a playwright, the first consideration would be popularity."

In London, judging by the paucity of information that has come down to us, he was known to nobody of any importance. C. M. Ingleby (A Century of Praise, 1874) said "It is plain for one thing that the bard of our admiration was unknown to the men of that age". The man who later busied himself in Stratford in suing for small debts and trading in malt hid his literary light under a bushel in London. The only allusions are to his purchase of a house and to occasional acting.

As to his residence, we know for certain that about 1602-04 he was lodging at the corner of Monkwell Street and Silver Street; the landlord being a "tire maker". This was revealed by documents discovered in 1909 in the Public Record Office relating to a legal action. In Shakspeare's deposition he is described as "Gentleman of Stratford-on-Avon". When he left London permanently who can say? We do know that his death in 1616 caused no comment. The late Dr. Mackail (quite orthodox) said "Shakespeare's retirement from the theatre and from London seems to have passed almost unnoticed. Even his death, most remarkable of all, did not call forth in that copiously elegiac age a single extant line of elegy". Dr. F.S. Boas avowed it as "amazing" that fifty allusions had been found to the death of Ben Jonson and not one to Shakespeare's.

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Norse Johnson, Editor

AUTUMN
NEWSLETTER 1995
Vol. 31, No. 4



THE FOLLOWING IS THE CONTINUING CONTROVERSY BETWEEN
BOB GRUMMAN AND THE EDITOR OF THE NEWSLETTER
(Summer 1995, Vol. 31, No. 3)

One of Bob Grumman's disclaimers:

"Specifically, should we expect the Shakespearean plays literally to reflect the life of the author?...How clearly autobiographically, for instance, are Bernard Shaw's plays?"

Editor's specific answer:

When Richard L. Coe, drama critic at the Washington Post, asserted that "George Bernard Shaw was astute enough to put himself, sometimes a little, sometimes a lot, into every character he wrote, he was crediting to the playwright's intention that which the New York Times drama critic perceived he could not help: to Brooks Atkinson, in the final analysis, all characters represent at least some aspect of the author, for no one can write about anything that is totally outside his experience."

Another of Bob Grumman's disclaimers:

"... The argument of Charlton Ogburn that you use against me (that (1) Shakespeare had an aristocratic outlook and that (2) he must therefore have been an aristocrat) seems to me beside the point. It has nothing to do with the statistical examination of many plays beside Shakespeare's that I proposed."

Editor's specific refutation:

Frank Harris, author (1856-1931) listed in Columbia Encyclopedia (5th Ed.), who "edited successively a number of periodicals", wrote that, "(Shakespeare) was an aristocrat born ... and felt in himself a kinship for the courtesies, chivalries and generous aristocratic life ...Everybody has noticed the predilection of his own poetic spirit and charm. His lower orders for all food for comedy or farce; he will not treat them seriously. "

Hugh R. Trevor-Roper (1914) listed in Columbia Encyclopedia (5th Ed.) "British historian and Regius professor of modern history." Also referred to Shakespeare as "whoever he was" and in "the independent sub-noble world of artisans and craftsmen, if it exists, for Shakespeare only as his butt, Bottom, Quince, Snug, Dogberry and Verges, dull - these poor imbeciles are used to amuse the nobility by their clumsiness. Even the middle classes are scarcely better treated."

A century ago, Walt Whitman (1819-92), listed in the Columbia Encyclopedia (5th Ed.) "Considered by many to be the greatest of all American poets", remarked that Shakespeare's "...low characters, mechanics, even the loyal henchman - all in themselves - serve as capital foils to the artistocracy. The comedies (equisite as they certainly are) bringing in admirably portrayed character, have the unmistakable hue of plays, portraits made for the diversion of the elite of the castle, and from its point of view. The comedies are altogether non-acceptable to America and Democracy."

We are told in Sidney Whitman's "Personal Reminiscence of Prince Bismarck", pp. 135-6, that in 1892 Prince Bismarck said, "He could not understand now it were possible that a man, however gifted with the intuition of genius, could have written what was attributed to Shakespeare unless he had been in touch with the great affairs of state, behind the scenes of political life, and also intimate with all the social courtesies and refinements of thought which in Shakespeare's time were only to be met within the highest circle."

"It also seemed to Prince Bismarck incredible that the man who had written the greatest dramas in the world's literature could, of his own free will in the prime of life, have retired to such a place as Stratford-on-Avon and lived there for years, cut off from intellectual society, and out of touch with the world."

In my convinced opinion that any open-minded scholar who reads such as Frank Harris, Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, Walt Whitman and Prince Bismarck's predicated that the author "William Shakespeare" had an "aristocratic outlook" but Will. Shaksper of Stratford did not and could not have had an "aristocratic outlook."

* * * * *

KILL ALL THE LAWYERS
Shakespeare's Legal Appeal
(Princeton University Press, 1994)
By
Daniel J. Kornstein

"Much depends on how we account for the legal knowledge of the author of Shakespeare's works. If we conclude that Shakespeare was either a law clerk or a lawyer or otherwise became sufficiently familiar with legal things, the Shakespeare edifice remains standing undamaged and perhaps even enhanced. But the contrary conclusions that Shakespeare was not a clerk or a lawyer and could not otherwise have acquired by himself the legal expertise reflected in the plays - amounts to a powerful cruise missile launched into the midst of Shakespeare scholarship. To answer the question 'How did Shakespeare know so much about law?' by saying 'There is no way he could possibly know so much law' is to conclude that William Shakespeare of Stratford did not write the works of Shakespeare." (Page 238).

-Alan M. Dershowitz, Harvard Law School:

"Bravo! Kornstein's tour de force stimulated me to go back to Hamlet, Macbeth and King Lear and to use them more frequently in my teaching and litigation. It is remarkable how relevant Shakespeare continues to be to the law and how Kornstein brings out his contemporary relevance in imaginative new ways."

MARTIN LUTHER AT ELSINORE?
THE NEW YORKER AIRS A BIZARRE DISPUTE OVER HAMLET

A bizarre dispute over Hamlet's hidden meaning between a Hollywood movie producer who became a Shakespeare scholar and a Boston University professor who became his "tutor" was reported in a major article in The New Yorker of November 20.

The Hollywood mogul, Steve Sohmer, 53, and Professor Mary Ann McGrail brought their lawyers into their quarrel. At issue was how much about which sources each could write for scholarly journals.

Both became convinced that the life of Martin Luther and his theology lay hidden in Hamlet and that Shakespeare used the play as a commentary on the Protestant Reformation launched by Luther. Along with other scholars they noted, for example, that Hamlet studied at Wittenberg, where Luther supposedly nailed his 95 theses to the church door in 1502, and that after Hamlet kills Polonius he refers to "a certain convocation of politic worms", an echo of the Diet of Worms, which denounced Luther. Sohmer and McGrail found more allusions and source books that may have influenced Shakespeare. They were doing the same kind of work that Oxfordians do to find the contemporary political meanings in the plays--and to find the true author.

McGrail, 37, studied Shakespeare with Professor Marjorie Garber at Harvard, where she received her doctorate. She then became interested in Shakespeare's political thinking in the complicated political pressures of the time. She taught courses on censorship and literature, with a special focus on Shakespeare. The New Yorker article opines, "Maybe Shakespeare wouldn't have been beheaded for staging a play on Luther, but it would have been enormously risky." (Oxfordians hold that only someone like the 17th earl of Oxford, because of his position in court, could have taken that risk.)

David Remnick, author of the article, notes that "critics of all schools are still searching for an answer to the question 'Who is Shakespeare?'" Primarily a man of the theater? Of the court? A Roman Catholic? Gay? And Remnick continues:

Scholars are still poking around the question of authorship, the possibility that someone else--Bacon; or De Vere, the Earl of Oxford; or someone quite obscure--wrote one or more of the plays now attributed to Shakespeare.

Sohmer met Professor McGrail at Boston University where he got an M.A. His doctorate is from Oxford University. He launched his personal Shakespeare studies after being fired as head of Columbia Pictures. Four summers ago he hired Professor McGrail at \$100 an hour plus most expenses to meet with him two hours a day during the summers. Disagreement over who would publish what and get the credit led to the dispute and the call for the lawyers. After much wrangling and depositions, they both agreed to drop legal action.

Remnick used a number of Shakespeare scholars to critique the dispute, including Stephen Greenblatt of UC-Berkeley, Lawrence Danson of Princeton, Peter W.M. Blayney of the Folger Shakespeare Library, and especially James Shapiro of Columbia. They offered various opinions but generally reserved judgment on whether Martin Luther inspired Hamlet.

Who really wrote the plays

Charles Vere, the Earl of Burford, is a direct descendant of Edward De Vere, the 16th century Earl of Oxford believed by a growing number of highly respected literary scholars and historians to have been the person who actually wrote the works long attributed to William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon.

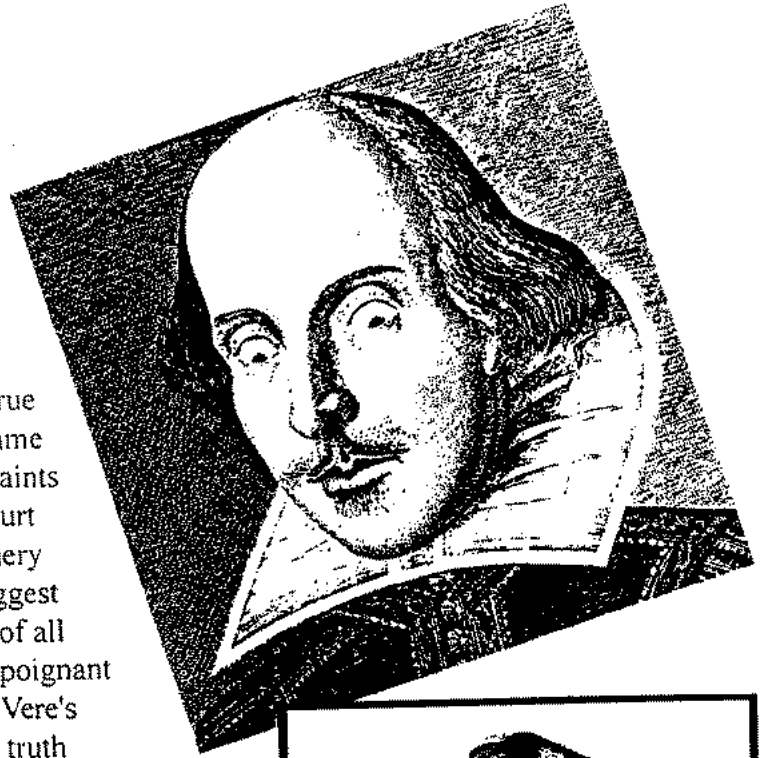
One of the most basic tenets of the Western canon is that these plays -- the greatest literary works in the English language -- were written by a man of little or no education who, while possessing a prodigious vocabulary, could barely sign his own name.

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An honors graduate of Oxford University, Charles Vere is a dynamic, articulate proponent of this conclusion, as well as an expert on the Elizabethan Age. His fascinating lectures have amazed audiences at the Smithsonian Institution, Harvard University, Yale, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and over 100



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of "William Shakespeare?"

An Historical Context

"I no longer believe that the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. I am convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford."

— Sigmund Freud

"I am haunted by the conviction that the divine William is the biggest and most successful fraud ever practised on a patient world."

— Henry James

"I think Oxford wrote Shakespeare. If you don't, there are some awfully funny coincidences to explain."

— Orson Welles

"Conceiv'd out of the fullest heat and pulse of European feudalism...one of the 'wolfish earls' so plenteous in the plays themselves, or some born descendant and knower, might seem to be the true author of those amazing works." "...I am firm against Shaksper -- I mean the Avon man, the actor."

— Walt Whitman

"It is a great comfort, to my way of thinking, that so little is known concerning the poet. The life of Shakespeare is a fine mystery, and I tremble every day lest something should turn up."

— Charles Dickens

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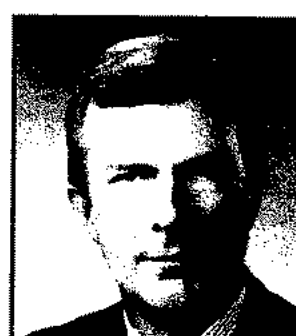
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Dear Morse,

18 Sept. 95

A big thanks for correcting that tiny typo from the last issue - much appreciated.

I've enclosed for you a small review of my latest slide lecture at the San Francisco Press Club. It had a great turn out because I managed to get interviewed on the authorship on a local radio show ("FORUM" with Michael Krasny) on August 18.

A little publicity goes a long way!

Yours sincerely,
Katherine V. Chiljan

* * *

At the Crest of the TIDAL WAVE: A Forecast for the Great Bear Market
(Published by New Classics Library (1995))

By Robert R. Prechter, Jr.

Chapter 1

PERSPECTIVE

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our ventures.

-Edward deVere, 17th Earl of Oxford
a.k.a. William Shakespeare



Robert R. Prechter, Jr.

Robert R. Prechter, Jr. is author of several books on markets and editor of two monthly forecasting publications, *The Elliott Wave Theorist* and *Global Market Perspective*. The Hulbert rating service reports that *The Theorist* exceeded the performance of the Wilshire 5000 over the past fifteen years, while being exposed to market risk less than 50% of the time. EWT has won *Hard Money Digest's* "Award of Excellence" twice and *Timer Digest's* "Timer of the Year" twice, the only newsletter to do so. In 1984, Mr. Prechter set an all time record in the United States Trading Championship by returning 444.4% in a monitored real-money options account in the four month contest period. In December 1989, Financial News Network named him "Guru of the Decade." In 1990-1991, Mr. Prechter served as President of the Market Technicians Association in its twenty-first year.

Mr. Prechter attended Yale University on a full scholarship and graduated in 1971 with a degree in psychology. He began his career as a Technical Market Specialist with the Merrill Lynch Ma: Analysis Department in New York City.

A Grand Summation

(Review of Charlton Ogburn's The Man who Was Shakespeare)

by

Tom Goff

[Ogburn, Charlton. The Man Who Was Shakespeare: A Summary of the Case Unfolded in The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality. 96 p. McLean, Virginia: EPM Publications, 1995.

To obtain, write: EPM Publications, Inc., 1003 Turkey Run Road, McLean, VA 22101. Cover price: \$5.95. For quickest delivery, send your UPS address and a check for \$8.95, \$5.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling, to EPM Publications, Inc., Box 490, McLean, VA 22101. Or call 1-800-289-2339. FAX (703) 442-0599.]

Since I last reviewed a work of Charlton Ogburn's, new information about Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, has continued to roll in. All of it, rightly read, tends to support the case for Oxford as the real "William Shake-speare". Much of that information has appeared in these pages. It includes (to give a recent example) the work of Peter R. Moore, with documentation by Prof. Alan R. Nelson, to substantiate what Oxfordians had suspected: that the Earl of Oxford was lamed by wounds or illness, perhaps in the 1582 attack upon him by Thomas Knyvet. Accordingly, the Earl seems to allude directly to his lameness when writing under a pen name in Shake-speare's Sonnets. Welcome and invaluable as such information is, it is also confirmation of a surmise made by Mr. Ogburn in The Mysterious William Shakespeare (first published in 1984 and now in its fourth edition).

Charlton Ogburn's great book of detection, documentation and-yes-biography has always been a work of literature in its own right, though a daunting one for readers lacking time to take in all 892 pages. Realizing this, Ogburn took all possible pains to make his work accessible, with clear headings and chapter summaries throughout. Furthermore, he collaborated with Lord Charles Vere, now Earl of Burford, on an abridgement of The Mysterious William Shakespeare, available, however, only from Sphere Books in England.

Now comes comes The Man Who Was Shakespeare, and readers new to Ogburn's work can view a summary of his lengthier case. This little volume should be on the shelves of every school and public library in the United States-as should the original. Surely even libraries hoping to downsize hours, collections, and budgets for new book purchases should at least be able to house several copies of this inexpensive synopsis, only 96 pages and bound pamphlet-like in attractive pebbled paper emblazoned with Oxford's spear-shaking lion (the emblem of Viscount Bulbeck, Oxford's hereditary title). It is organized into the same basic two divisions as The Mysterious William Shakespeare: the first part disposes of the case for the provincial Will Shakspeare, the supposed author of the plays and poems-who may have been chosen by Edward de Vere or others around him to act the role of "Shake-speare" and thus shield the true author from view. The second part present the fascinating case for Edward de Vere himself as the real "William Shake-speare". Again Mr. Ogburn's pen makes evident how badly successive generations of readers have been misled by the "Stratfordian" professors unwilling to abandon an untenable (though lucrative) thesis. And at what cost, especially to students: cheated of a compelling true story that illuminates literature and human nature alike!

Similar in shape to its parent volume, The Man Who Was Shakespeare has been rearranged in places for even greater readability. For example, valuable detail about Shakespeare's First Folio-and its inadvertent (or advertent) clues to the author's identity-was included in the first large section of the original book, which bears mostly upon Will Shakspeare's ill-suitedness for authorship. There, too, Shakspeare's uncouth, cryptically inscribed monument at Stratford's Trinity Church was discussed (that strange memorial graced by the bust of Shakspeare Mark Twain describes: "the putty face, unseamed of care...with the deep, deep, deep, subtle, subtle, subtle, expression of a bladder").

Here, such material has been condensed and put in chronological order, so we can perceive the effect of Oxford's death upon events immediately afterwards. We sense the unease of the powerful figures around Oxford and his family: those who sought to bury his greatness in hugger-mugger, who vainly hoped to obscure the Earl's luster with an epitaph, composed to elevate the wrong man's reputation. Small touches, including so

simple a shift into chronology, can help us better understand the motives of Oxford and his enemies simultaneously. We empathize with these long-dead human beings more easily; and cases hinging so signally upon identity do require the reader to identify with the biographical subject.

The Man Who Was Shakespeare is a summary, so we shouldn't look for masses of original new research; but Mr. Ogburn, to his credit, has been unable to refrain from quoting one or two new items of interest. For example, even that citadel of orthodoxy, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, has recently felt unembarrassed to publish passages like this one, cited by Ogburn on page 12:

Certainly there is little [in the Shakspeare life records] to remind us that we are studying the life of one who in his writings emerges as perhaps the most gifted of all time in describing the human condition. Here in Stratford he seems merely to have been a man of the world, buying up property, laying in ample stocks of barley and malt, when others were starving, selling off his surpluses and pursuing debtors in court, and conniving, as it seems, in the Welcombe enclosures...

The remarkable admission is by Robert Bearman, author of Shakespeare [sic] in the Stratford Records (1994). Besides this, Ogburn cites again some recent information supplied by Richard P. Roe, which indicates that Shakespeare's Tempest may have been composed with the volcanic Lipari Islands (off Italian shores and seen by Oxford) partly in mind. That is almost all the new material, but it's just as well. To read the new condensation is to know what facts the author believes central to the case; and enforced brevity throws crucial items into sharper relief. I've never been able to keep in mind all the monetary clues Edward de Vere works into The Merry Wives of Windsor, as if to hint that he is the original of Fenton, Anne Cecil of Anne Page, and Philip Sidney of Slender; but Ogburn, in this connection, simply reminds us that both Slender and young Sidney could expect incomes of about three hundred pounds a year.

Being able to speed more quickly through the basics also reassures the reader, much as a quick shuffle through a deck of playing cards will reveal their values while their corners flick rapidly in and out of view. Many items in the inventory are familiar to most Oxfordians: the history of doubt in the rustic Shakspeare, that purveyor of "smart repartee and...the selling of bargains"; the cavalcade of opposition to Stratford Bardolatry (Twain, Galsworthy, Freud, Henry James, Nabokov et al.); the real author's noble upbringing, travel and erudition; the implications of the Sonnets and Hamlet; or the mysteries of Greene's Groats-worth of Wyt, Willobie His Avis, and the 1609 preface to Troilus and Cressida. Ogburn keeps his eye trained steadily on the essentials.

To compress "infinite riches" into a "little room" is never easy; and the strain sometimes shows here in the results. Occasionally a redundancy peeps through ("conjugal married contentment" is one, on page 89), or a small oddity of expression, as when Ogburn writes, on page 47, of the treacherous Rowland Yorke: "We know him...for his contribution to Parolles in All's Well, a braggart...follower of Bertram's, on whom his baleful influence is exorcised only when he is shown up as a coward and traitor." Recollection of the stock phrase "to exercise one's influence" evidently misled someone to substitute it for Mr. Ogburn's grammatically correct but slightly awkward construction: whereupon another someone, at the writer's behest, has pasted "exorcised" back in on a tiny slip of paper. Altogether, the book could have benefited from a more thorough proofreading.

But such faults are insubstantial; they also remind us of the magnitude of the accomplishment. And the book is attractively designed, with quotes from "Shakespeare's" verse cast in boldface type, perhaps to remind us that Oxford's writing is laced with self-disclosures. The Man Who Was Shakespeare is further proof of Charlton Ogburn's familiar eloquence, tenacity, intellect and persuasive power. His decades of work at the writer's craft and his sheer expertise in his subject make words like these (page 5) ring out:

[T]he story of which [The Man Who Was Shakespeare] presents the highlights will, I believe, be found the greatest in the history of literature, and one of the most compelling ever, a life story on a par with the immortal Shakesperean dramas themselves—which indeed, it tellingly imbues. From any accounts written of him, the dramatist is probably less known to the generality of readers than any other great writer at the same time that he is the best known of all as he stands revealed in the poems and plays that have gripped our imaginations for four centuries.

I strongly recommend The Man Who Was Shakespeare to the general reader, to the veteran Oxfordian brushing up on the fundamentals of the Shakespeare controversy, and to all school and public libraries.

The World's Most Baffling Literary Mystery*

by Morse Johnson

According to standard Shakespearean biographies, William Shakespeare came from Stratford-on-Avon to London around 1587. It is assumed (there being no record) that he had spent 4 or 5 years in the Stratford Grammar School (curriculum unknown). There is no evidence of any sort, by document or hearsay, that he had exhibited any other scholarly, literary or cultural interests or skills or that he had ever written one word. Indeed, the distinguished 19th century biographer, Halliwell-Phillips, whose methodical and extensive research of the Stratford records is still considered authoritative, wrote:

"Removed prematurely from school, residing with illiterate relatives... thrown into the midst of occupations adverse to scholastic progress—it is difficult to believe that when he first left Stratford he was not all but destitute of polished accomplishments. He could not, at all events, under the circumstances in which he had then so long been placed, have had the opportunity of acquiring a refined style of composition."

Undoubtedly, moreover, he spoke with a Warwickshire dialect, almost unintelligible to Londoners.

This is the man who tradition claims that from the time of his arrival in London in his early 20s to by the time he reached 40 had achieved the following as "William Shakespeare".

- Written and revised with a quill pen no fewer than 30 Five Act dramatic and poetic masterpieces, all of which reflect, as testified to by esteemed experts in their respective disciplines, profound and extensive classical learning, professional comprehension of the law and legal procedures, meticulous information about historic events and persons from ancient times to his period, detailed and accurate knowledge of contemporary court affairs and the idiosyncrasies of high court personages, a fluent command of the lores of heraldry, ornithology, horticulture, aristocratic sports, naval and military affairs and an intimate familiarity with topography, customs, monuments and life in Italy and France;

- Written with a quill pen 154 mature and matchless sonnets, all of which compress emotions, imagery and philosophies with unparalleled brevity;

- Written with a quill pen the two scholarly, polished and lengthy poems, Venus and Adonis and The Rape of Lucrece;

- Provided day-to-day managerial and playwright participation in the production of a great number of performances by The Lord Chamberlain's Company in several playhouses in London, at court and in theaters throughout England;

- Rehearsed for and acted in many of these productions;

- Maintained a family and residence in Stratford and conducted an active business, made personal loans, purchased three separate pieces of real estate, hoarded corn and frequently litigated there, without ever writing a letter and without any Stratford resident—family member, associate, lawyer, friend—ever having an inkling of his literary activities.

*This title is drawn from Hamilton Basso, The New Yorker (April 8, 1950).

Save for the existence of the works themselves (sole reliance on which simply begs the question), exhaustive research has not found one whit of evidence as to this man's activities from 1587 to 1604 to account for his attainment of any of the vast and diverse learning and lore the author of the works had to have possessed.

And when he died and was buried in 1616, there was not a trace of one single person giving any indication that this man was the author of the plays and poems which had probably inspired and delighted more people, from royalty to commoner, than all of his fellow dramatists and poets put together.

Can any mind be so credulous or so frozen by centuries of tradition as to accept as even remotely possible that such a prodigious and voluminous outpouring of soaring and encyclopedic creativity could have been conceived, perfected and hand-written by a man with such a barren and incongruous background in less than 20 years, by the time he reached 40, while still engaged in other mostly extraneous, time-consuming and energy-sapping activities?

* * * * *

"This Star of England" - A Book Written Forty Years Ago
and Still a Goldmine of Information

by Florence C. Shepard

Recently I was fortunately able to borrow a copy of "This Star of England" by Dorothy and Charlton Ogburn. Their primary purpose in writing this classic study was not to solve the authorship identity problem; rather it was to show how key events in the life of Edward de Vere are reflected in his work. Out of curiosity I checked the reviews written when the book first came out in 1952. It was greeted with condescension, dismissed with the attitude of "Ho Hum - here is more of the same old Oxfordian stuff." Admittedly this is a big book, occasionally rambling. I could understand that a reviewer might have felt that some of the "identity clues" were far fetched, perhaps have accused the authors of overzealous redundancy. At least such criticisms would have indicated that the critic had read the book. However even a perfunctory perusal should have aroused some appreciation of the fact that here was a magnificent product of painstaking scholarship. One can only come to the conclusion that the critics gave a jerk of their knees in deference to the orthodox academia of the time.

The authors, the parents of Charlton Ogburn, Jr., proved that it is not necessary to search for ciphered messages in the texts of the Shakespearean plays to find the name of the author. Oxford used his own life experiences to illuminate his plots and characters. Knowing the story of his life is all that we need. The author's identity is right there in front of us, revealed in every page of the plays and every line of the Sonnets. He gives us an abundance of clues if we look for them, working from the well-documented facts of his biography.

One aspect of the results of their in-depth research that is especially valuable is the tracing of the writing and early performances of many of the plays. It has always seemed to me that the fourteen-year span between the birth dates of Shaksper of Stratford and Oxford is one of the most convincing arguments for identifying Oxford as the real author. The Stratford man would have been till in his mid-twenties by 1590 and to me this simply does not allow enough time for experimentation in the art of playwriting.

The Ogburns point out that by 1574 (when Shaksper would have been a boy of ten) Oxford had already written embryonic versions of plays later revised and polished. These sketchy masques presented as court entertainment would undergo much rewriting and refinement in subsequent years. Oxford may have been a great literary genius but he was basically no different from any other professional writer in the development of his career. He too had to work through an apprenticeship period during which he constantly rewrote while sharpening his poetic ability. For me this greatly enhances his profile.

Although "This Star of England" is so detailed that it often makes for dense reading, I can testify that it is well worth the effort. For it was through this book that Shakespeare-Oxford emerged into the light as an authentic human personality whom I feel I know as I know other great writers. There has always, ever since high school English classes and that college course I took, been a veil that obscured Shakespeare as a person. That veil has now been lifted with the reading of this brilliant study by the senior Ogburns. The question I was left with was "Why has it taken four hundred years for the pieces of this puzzle to fall into place so logically?" I would like to urge that a new edition of the book, perhaps with some judicious editing to reduce its length, be published in the near future.

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TWO OXFORDIANS WIN DISTINGUISHED LITERARY AWARDS

For two years in a row an outspoken Oxfordian has been awarded the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters -- one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes.

In November the judges awarded the 1995 medal to David McCullough, acclaimed author of Truman. McCullough contributed a foreword to Charlton Ogburn's The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality.

Last year's winner also endorsed Ogburn's book. He was Clifton Fadiman, whose jacket endorsement for Ogburn's second edition starts, "Count me a convert..."

* * * * *

OGBURN BOOK DONATED TO WILLIAM & MARY COLLEGE

The newspaper of William and Mary College reported that the college received Charlton Ogburn's The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality as a gift arranged by Mary Louise Hammersmith of Williamsburg, VA. Her gift was made possible by a generous grant by Mr. and Mrs. Albert H. Walker of Baltimore.

BEFORE LOONEY, DID ANYONE KNOW OXFORD WAS SHAKESPEARE?
A NOVEL, A SONG AND A PORTRAIT INVENTORY SUGGEST SO

by Richard F. Whalen

Why has no mention of Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford, as the man behind the pseudonym Shakespeare been found in the centuries after his death and up to 1920, when J. Thomas Looney published Shakespeare 'Discovered'? Was Oxford completely forgotten? Or did knowledge of him as the true author go underground?

In the half-century after Oxford's death in 1604, everybody who was anybody undoubtedly knew that Oxford was Shakespeare--but also knew that it was not to be broadcast, if anyone even cared. It was an open secret.

By 1630 Oxford's children were all dead, and his cousin Horatio de Vere died in 1635. So by the 1640s, memories of him were mostly second hand; and, of course, in 1641 the theaters were closed by the Puritans. Interest in dramatists went dormant. By 1660 when the theaters finally re-opened, it's possible that memory of Oxford as Shakespeare had faded and disappeared.

Or had it?

Perhaps some knowledge of Oxford's authorship was passed on during the 250 years from the 1660s to 1920. Records and publications as yet unexamined may show that to be true. Also, it must be noted that the myth of the man from Stratford took hold in the early 1700s, and anti-Stratfordian heresy was not tolerated. The Rev. James Wilmot, who could find nothing supporting Will Shakspeare as the author, had his papers burned for fear his Stratford neighbors would bitterly resent his doubts about their mythical hometown hero.

Three items have turned up recently that suggest--only suggest--that during those two and half centuries certain people may have connected Oxford to the author Shakespeare. Two are from the 18th century and one is from the 19th century. A fourth, wherein the Stratford monument and the Welbeck portrait of Oxford converge, may prove to fit the pattern.

A Novel Whose Hero is a De Vere

The 19th century item is a novel published in 1827 and having the title, De Vere, or the Man of Independence (1). The novel was recently brought to light by Sam Cherubim of Northampton, Massachusetts, who came across it in a library, and passed the word to Roger Stritmatter of UMass-Amherst. I am indebted to both of them for calling it to my attention.

De Vere, or the Man of Independence, appropriately enough was published anonymously. The author soon became known; he was Robert Plumer Ward (no known relation to the Oxfordian scholars William Plumer Fowler or Bernard M. Ward.)

Robert Plumer Ward was not your typical 19th century literary novelist. He was first of all a lawyer and successful career politician who held senior government positions. His novels were based on the contemporary political scene, which he knew well. They caused considerable sensation since his main characters were modeled on government leaders, including William Pitt, the prime minister. (2)

Robert Plumer Ward thus was a political insider writing anonymously about government affairs disguised as fiction--just as Oxford was writing pseudonymously about court affairs as Shakespeare. Moreover, a descendant of Oxford is the hero of Ward's novel.

Nothing should be forced when looking for possible references to Oxford and Shakespeare in the works of other writers, but there are a number of striking correspondences in Ward's novel. First of all, quotations from Shakespeare lead off the title page in 88 of the 93 chapters (5 are by Milton). And Shakespeare is quoted fairly often throughout the novel. Robert Plumer Ward knew his Shakespeare.

At the start of the novel, the author/narrator, who is named Beauclerk, meets Mortimer de Vere, the novel's hero, and discovers that they are related. Mortimer de Vere is a direct descendant of Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford, and at his country house there is a column on a pedestal with an inscription:

Trust in thy own good sword,
Rather than Princes' word.
Trust e'en in fortune sinister,
Rather than Princes' minister.
Of either, trust the guile,
Rather than woman's smile.
But most of all eschew,
To trust in Parvenu.

The only synonym for "parvenu" in Webster's unabridged dictionary is "upstart", as in "upstart crow".

Mortimer de Vere, the hero of the novel, then explains that the verse was supposed to have been taken from Oxford's study at Castle Hedingham. He's not sure who the parvenu is. But here is a novelist in 1827 creating (?) a verse from Oxford's study that seemingly warns the reader to shun an upstart like the "shake-scene" in Robert Greene's Groatsworth of Wit (1592), who seems to stand for the man from Stratford. (3) Mortimer mentions, too, Oxford's quarrels with his father-in-law, Lord Burleigh, and other details of Oxford's life. Writing in the early 19th century, Ward knows a lot about Oxford and Shakespeare.

The novel is a long tale of political intrigue and romance, ending with a dispute over a will. The hero, Mortimer de Vere, is brilliant, impetuous and uncommonly proud and upright, a man of so much integrity he has trouble succeeding in the world of politics. The book ends with a dramatic trial over an inheritance.

Several passages describing Mortimer de Vere sound like a description of Oxford. For example:

"His enthusiastic imagination, which often ran away with him, and falling upon a spirit hereditarily independent, influenced, as we shall see, the whole cast of his life." (p42)

Another example:

Mortimer read deeply in law and history and he found that "Edward, earl of Oxford, in the days of Elizabeth, united in his single person, the character of her greatest noble, knight and poet." (p61)

At one point Mortimer and the woman he eventually marries, known as the "queen" of her household and the "lady of the castle", plan a theatrical performance, a masque. (p184)

Mortimer de Vere says: "And what can I do for you ma cousine?" She answers: "O! a great deal,- for while I am the manager of my theater, you must be the poet."

"I never wrote a verse in my life," replies de Vere, despairingly, yet half laughing at the proposal."

The masque raises many questions among the audience: "What was the exact meaning of the masques? Who was the compiler?"

Quickly, however, the word spreads that Mortimer de Vere wrote the masque and the allusions are to the "queen" of the household, the "lady of the castle". Later, she says, "the bard wants to send me to London to reign over I know not what sort of people."

In the audience is a parvenu, an upstart. He is the son of a manufacturer who converts his name from lower-class Bartholomew to upper-class Bertie and is notorious for insinuating himself into nobility. He buys himself a knighthood just as Will Shakspeare, also a parvenu, bought himself a coat of arms.

These references and allusions linking Mortimer de Vere, a descendant of Oxford, to playwriting for the queen of the household, constitute a small part of a long novel. But they are striking, given the evidence that the author of the novel was well versed in his Shakespeare and well acquainted with the historical personage Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford.

Did he know the truth? More research and analysis may turn up stronger connections and permit more telling interpretations.

Dibdin's Song for the Shakespeare Jubilee

The second item of interest is a song by Charles Dibdin, a prolific composer and lyricist. He wrote the words and music for the Shakespeare Jubilee in Stratford in 1769, produced and directed by its star, David Garrick. The songs were collected and published by Dibdin.

A page from one of Dibdin's songbooks was on display at the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1994. On the page was a ballad called "Sweet Willy. O." (4) The name "Willy" recalls Edmund Spenser's "our pleasant Willy" in "The Teares of the Muses", wherein Spenser is thought by many to refer to Shakespeare. (5) Willy combined with O followed by a period (Oxford's initial, so to speak) may be seen as suggesting Shakespeare Oxford. In addition, the multiple use of "ever" and its variations in the verses echoes E. Vere. In the first verse "e_ver" is split as shown. (Emphasis added).

The pride of all nature was sweet Willy. O.
The first of all swains,
He gladdened the plains,
None e ver was like to the sweet Willy O.

He sung it so rarely did sweet Willy O;
He melted each Maid,
So skillfull he play'd,
No Shepherd e'er pip'd like the sweet Willy O.

All Nature obey'd him, the sweet Willy O;
Wherever he came,
What e'er had a name,
Whenever he sung follow'd sweet Willy O.

He would be a Soldier the sweet Willy O;
When arm'd in the field,
With sword and with shield,
The Laurel was won by the sweet Willy O.

He charmed them when living the sweet Willy O;
And when Willy dy'd,
'Twas Nature that sighed,
To part with her All in her sweet Willy O.

In twenty short lines, "ever" appears five times, that is, in twenty-five percent of the lines.

Dibdin was immensely prolific and published a five-volume opus entitled, The Professional Life of Mr. Dibdin, Written by Himself (1803). A scan of five hundred lines of similar ballads produced only three "never"s and two "whenever"s--no "ever"s or other word forms with "ever". That's one percent of the lines.

So, in his first ballad for the Shakespeare Jubilee called "Sweet Willy. O." Dibdin used "ever" in some form twenty-five times more often than he did in his other lyrics.

As it happens, the last words of the Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford, words written by David Garrick, were: "Bravo Jubilee! Shakespeare for Ever!" (6)

Did Charles Dibdin and David Garrick know the truth? Garrick did not schedule a single play by Shakespeare to be performed at his Jubilee in the poet, dramatist's supposed hometown, Stratford-on-Avon. More research may reveal what they knew.

Was Oxford's Portrait Shakespeare's

About a decade after the Shakespeare Jubilee occurred a third indication that someone may have believed that Oxford was Shakespeare. This clue was in a portrait inventory that seemed to imply that a portrait of Oxford was thought to be that of Shakespeare.

Derran Charlton, an archival researcher of South Yorkshire, England, made the discovery at Wentworth Woodhouse and published his finding in the De Vere Newsletter last May.

The inventory of portraits, dated 1782, lists all the heirloom portraits mentioned in the 1696 will of William, earl of Wentworth--except one. Missing from the inventory list is a portrait of Edward de Vere, 17th earl of Oxford. Where did that portrait go?

Scanning the inventory, Derran Charlton also noted that a portrait of the same dimensions was described simply as "Shakespeare". No portrait of Shakespeare was mentioned in the will, nor has any been found, nor has the inventory reference been linked to any of the other purported portraits of Shakespeare the Stratford man.

Furthermore, the listing of the Shakespeare portrait was alongside listings of portraits of Oxford's cousin, Lord Horace Vere, and his grandson, James Stanley. Since Oxford's portrait is omitted from the list and one called "Shakespeare" turns up among Oxford's relatives, it seems quite possible that whoever drew up the inventory called the Oxford portrait "Shakespeare". Otherwise the disappearance of the one and emergence of the other, as described by Derran Charlton, is quite unaccountable.

Finally, a convergence of pictures of "Shakspeare" and of Oxford in the 18th century may someday fit the pattern. At the point of convergence is Edward Harley, whose library became the Harleian Collection. In 1737 Harley took the engraver George Vertue with him to see Stratford and the monument in Trinity Church. Vertue sketched the monument but declined to show the face of the monument's "Shakspeare" in his sketch. Instead, he substituted a likeness based on the so-called Chandos portrait of Shakespeare. (7) He also put Harley into his sketch, as a lone spectator of this bust with a substitute face.

As it happens, Harley was the 2nd earl of Oxford (second creation), while his wife had connections to the 17th earl of Oxford (first creation).

She was the great-great-granddaughter of Oxford's favorite cousin, the famous Horace de Vere. Also, she had inherited the so-called Welbeck portrait of the 17th earl of Oxford, now at the National Portrait Gallery.

Harley and Vertue are the subject of a paper by Andrew Hannas of Purdue University that he presented at the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable last June. In it he raises intriguing questions about what Harley knew about "Shakspeare's" likeness and identity and why Vertue shows Harley gazing at the Chandos head stuck like a mask on the face of "Shakspeare" in the Stratford monument.

A song from the Shakespeare Jubilee, an obscure portrait inventory and a 19th century novel all seem to suggest that the true identity of Shakespeare was suspected or known in the centuries between the deaths of Oxford's immediate descendants and the publication of Looney's landmark book. Only in recent years did these three clues turn up. There may be more in 17th, 18th and 19th century literature and records that would indicate that people knew that the works of Shakespeare were written by Edward de Vere, the 17th earl of Oxford.

Endnotes:

1. De Vere; or the Man of Independence, by Robert Plumer Ward. Philadelphia: Carey, 1827.
2. The Dictionary of National Biography. See also Memoirs of the Political and Literary Life of Robert Plumer Ward, Esq., by Edmund Phipps. London: Murray, 1850. On page 106 Ward is called "a spectator of the game of politics." On page 165 is a letter from Benjamin Disraeli to Ward praising his book. Ward himself energetically disclaims that real people are represented in the book. (xi)
3. Ward, 25. The hero, Mortimer, guesses that "parvenu" may refer to Burghley or an "insinuating, designing flatterer of a secretary", but in the end cannot decide.
4. The Overture, Songs, Airs and Chorusses in the Jubilee of Shakespeare's Garland as Performed at Stratford upon Avon, and the Theatre Royal Drury Lane to Which is Added a Cantata Called Queen Mab or Fairies Jubilee. Composed by Charles Dibdin. London: Johnston, ca. 1775. The Folger's copy is unbound. Earlier editions of Dibdin's Jubilee works were published in 1769.
5. The Mysterious William Shakespeare: The Myth and the Reality, by Charlton Ogburn, 719-720.
6. David Garrick: A Biography, by Alan Kendall. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985 (142).
7. The sketch is in William Shakespeare: Records and Images, by S. Schoenbaum. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981 (163). See also his Shakespeare's Lives, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991 (124-5, 202-6), wherein Schoenbaum mentions Vertue's sketch of Will Shakspeare's house--from someone else's memory--but not his eyewitness sketch of the Shakspeare monument with Harley in the foreground, which is the more historically significant of the two. Vertue's sketch is also found in "New Place" by Frank Simpson in Shakespeare Survey No. 5 from Cambridge University Press in 1952.

From the Past President

Congratulations to Charles Vere Lord Burford on his election at Greensboro as president of the Shakespeare Oxford Society. The vote of the trustees was unanimous and well deserved, a vote of confidence in the future.

The unanimous vote was especially pleasing to me, since I nominated Charles after informing the board that I was not standing for re-election as president. It was, I said, time for a change as the society moves toward the twenty-first century and the 400th anniversary of the death of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford.

These were my reasons: First, I had recommended a by-law provision that the president be limited to three one-year terms so that new trustees would see opportunities to hold office in the society; the by-laws with the term limit provision were adopted by the membership at Greensboro. Charles Burford is the first beneficiary of that provision. Second, Charles had done a great job as chairman of the Publications Committee, and the society was ready for a change in the newsletter. He picked up that project and next year the society will have a newsletter produced by computerized desk-top publishing. Bill Boyle, already editor of the Ever Reader magazine on Internet and a new trustee, will design, edit and produce the new newsletter. Finally, I wanted to emphasize the opportunity for new trustees to take charge and bring new ideas to the society. In just a half dozen years the society has moved from a small literary club where everyone knew everyone else to a society of almost seven hundred members that is prominent in the media and gaining grudging recognition even in the Shakespeare establishment. And at the present rate of growth, we'll have well over a thousand members in a few years.

I want to thank all the trustees for their support and encouragement. But especially Len Deming for his expert management of the membership roles and the treasury, and Morse Johnson for publishing the newsletter. Morse's contribution in time, effort, dedication and his own personal resources are unparalleled in the society. He was there to publish the newsletter when the society needed him most.

This may sound like a valedictory, but it's not. I remain as a trustee and plan to make whatever contributions I can to the board and to the society. I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis at the 1996 conference.

Richard F. Whalen

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OXFORDIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN WORLD SHAKESPEARE CONGRESS; PLAN RECEPTION TO ENTERTAIN (EDUCATE?) PROFESSORS

Leaders of the Shakespeare establishment from all over the world will be in Los Angeles next April for the Sixth World Shakespeare Congress.

Oxfordians will be there, too.

Society Trustee Russ des Cognets of Lexington, Kentucky, is taking the lead to organize a reception at the Congress for any Stratfordian professors who want to meet and question Oxfordians on the evidence for Edward de Vere as the true author of the works of Shakespeare. Carol Sue Lipman of the Shakespeare Authorship Roundtable in Los Angeles is working with des Cognets on the event, a first for the society.

The trustees of the Shakespeare Oxford Society will be there for congress sessions. They will also hold their first meeting of 1996 in conjunction with the congress; and three society trustees will participate in congress sessions. They are Trustee Charles Boyle of Somerville, Massachusetts; Charles Vere Lord Burford of Boston, newly elected president of the society; and Professor Felicia Londre of the University of Missouri, newly elected trustee of the society and co-author of Shakespeare Companies and Festivals (Greenwood, 1995).

The congress is scheduling lectures, papers and about forty seminars. One of the more provocative seminars is "Fictions of Shakespeare's Life." The call for participants states: "Contributions touching in part on the Authorship Controversy will be considered, but card-carrying conspiracy theorists need not apply." Who said there's any conspiracy?

The congress is a combined conference of the International Shakespeare Association (ISA) and the Shakespeare Association of America (SAA). Russ des Cognets has for years organized the Oxfordian presence at SAA annual meetings.

Provocatively, the president of ISA is Sir John Gielgud, who sees great merit in the evidence for Oxford. Gielgud read Trustee Richard Whalen's book, Shakespeare: Who Was He?, and wrote to him: "I am very much inclined to agree with you and the Oxfordians..." He also signed Charles Boyle's petition for more research into the case for Oxford.

The combined ISA/SAA congress will be held April 7-14, 1996 at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles. Rooms are \$100 a night, with less expensive rooms at the Hyatt Regency. Registration fee of \$175 includes a luncheon and refreshments now and then. Anyone not already a member of the SAA should call or write Nancy Hodge, English Department, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, 75275, for room booking and membership forms.

Russ des Cognets, who is backing the Oxfordian reception, would appreciate additional funding that could help make the reception a major event at the congress. Send a tax-deductible contribution to the society at 7D Taggart Drive, Nashua, NH, 03060-5591 marked "for World Congress Reception."

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JOHN LOUTHER REPORTS:

From the Summer '95 issue of Iona College Shakespeare Newsletter comes an item some of you may have missed. On page 26 the newsletter's editors--John Mahon and Thomas Pendleton--lament academe's growing interest in hearing the Oxford story from Charles Burford (as well as deploring Burford's college platform 'score' compared to Irvin Matus').

The eye of this beholder detects what appears to be a jolt of editorial panic: "...It is surprising, if not disheartening, to learn that while Charles Burford has lectured at 56 colleges and universities (and the Folger Library), Irvin Matus has been invited to two (Iona being one). Burford is fluent and entertaining, his appearances are energetically promoted, and the iconoclastic obviously has an attraction that the orthodox lacks; but still -- Burford 56, Matus..."

THE SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY

Trustee Meeting at the Greensboro NC Airport Marriott Hotel
Hospitality Suite, First Floor

Agenda

Part One: 3 p.m., Thursday, September 28, 1995

1. Minutes of previous meeting
2. President's report
 - 1996 conference site
 - 1996 budget
 - 1996 organization
3. Membership chair report
4. Treasurer's report
5. By-laws (Deming/Price)
6. Nominating Committee (Burford)
7. Publications Committee (Burford)
8. Lecture tour (Burford)
9. Development Committee (Sears)
10. Internet (Boyle)
11. Shakespeare festivals (Price)
12. Creighton Library (Bronte)
13. SAA Los Angeles conference (des Cognets)
14. Primary source research project (Mosher)
15. Interim report on Greensboro conference (Atkins)
16. New business
17. Next meeting
18. Adjourn

19. General discussion
 - Professor Alan Nelson and Peter Moore
 - Conference papers chair
 - Roland Caldwell and Oxfordian "Super-group"
 - Other items

Part Two: 8:30 a.m., Sunday, October 1, 1995 (w/coffee etc.)

1. Election of officers
2. Remaining agenda items from Part One

Part Three (the best part): Sunday dinner at Trudy's.

WILL SHAKSPERE OF STRATFORD LIVED ONLY IN STRATFORD AND LONDON AND ONLY
VISITED THE AREAS BETWEEN STRATFORD AND LONDON

The scenes of the plays written by "William Shakespeare" are located in the following:

These plays are the only ones which are located in England:

Henry VI, 1 2 & 3

Henry V

Richard III

King Lear

King John

Macbeth

Richard II

Cymbeline

Henry IV, Part 1 & 2

Henry VIII

The Merry Wives of Windsor

These plays required well-traveled literary and political expertise:

Titus Andronicus - Rome

Julius Caesar - Rome nr Sardis

Comedy of Errors - Ephesus

Hamlet - Denmark

Taming of the Shrew - Verona

Troilus & Cressida - Troy

The Two Gentlemen of Verona-Milan

All's Well That Ends Well - Paris

Loves Labor Lost - Navarre

Measure For Measure - Vienna

Romeo & Juliet - Verona, Mantua

Othello - Cyprus

A Midsummer Night's Dream - Athens

Antony & Cleopatra - Roman Empire

The Merchant of Venice - Venice

Coriolanus - Rome

Much Ado About Nothing - Sicily

The Winter's Tale - Sicilia & Bohemia

As You Like It - Ardennes

The Tempest - At sea and on island

The Two Noble Kinsmen - Athens & Thebes

Do orthodox Stratfordians really believe that it would have been conceivable that since Will Shakspeare demonstrated that he had no interest whatsoever in other areas, he would write plays in a number of European scenes.

SHAKESPEARE DEATH MASK
REVIVED BY DAN RATHER ON CBS NEWS

Dan Rather has resurrected the death mask of Shakespeare.

On Rather's Evening News program September 18, CBS Correspondent Barry Peterson reported from Germany that Professor Hildegard Hammerschmidt-Hummel claims to have verified the authenticity of the death mask, owned by the Darmstadt town library. Experts used the "image-differentiation technique" to examine it.

Professor: Look at the nose. Look at the lips, the lips. They are really the same.

Peterson: If this were a criminal and not Shakespeare, would they be willing to go to court...?

Professor: Yes, yes.

Peterson: They were that confident?

Professor: That's what they told me. Yes, yes.

Then Peterson interviewed Roger Pringle of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in England. Pringle would have none of it. "I don't think one can put one's hand on one's heart and say that is precisely how Shakespeare looked," he said, adding later, "Indeed, some German writers even went so far as to claim that Shakespeare wasn't actually an Englishman, that he in fact was born and bred in Germany."

Dan Rather's closing comment was, "As You Like It."

The purported Shakespeare death mask apparently turned up in a rag-picker's shop in Mainz, Germany, in 1844; it became the subject of enthusiastic interest at the height of Bardolatry. S. Schoenbaum sounds skeptical in his 1991 account of the story (Shakespeare's Lives, 338-9).

Monday, September 18, was a slow news night on the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather.

* * * * *

PRINCE CHARLES LAUDS SHAKESPEARE (THUS OXFORD?)
FOR INSIGHTS INTO THE LIFE OF THE NOBLY BORN

Prince Charles is amazed at Shakespeare's insights into the burdens of being born into the nobility.

In his book, The Prince's Choice, which presents his favorite passages from Shakespeare, one passage is a particularly telling choice:

What infinite heart's ease

Must king's neglect that private men enjoy!

And what have kings that privates have not too,

Save ceremony, save general ceremony?

Henry V (4.P.189)

The book, which contains about forty excerpts from Shakespeare, will be published in the U.S. in May 1996. John Gielgud, who has expressed keen interest in the case for Oxford as Shakespeare, worked with Prince Charles on the CD and cassette recordings that accompany the book.

In the introduction to his book Prince Charles offers his own particularly telling comment: "I found myself wondering in amazement at Shakespeare's insight into the mind of someone born into this kind of position."

To the Editor
Shakespeare Oxford Newsletter

8 November 1995

Lincoln Cain's long letter (Summer 1995) about the Folger Shakespeare Library reflects a commendable enthusiasm for and dedication to the Oxfordian cause.

His letter, however, does not take into account developments at the Folger in recent years. The Folger is open to any qualified scholar who wants to study the authorship issue. Many Oxfordians have worked there, including book authors such as Charlton Ogburn and myself, academics such as Roger Stritmatter of UMass-Amherst (on Oxford's Bible, which the Folger owns) and a number of other Oxfordian researchers.

Oxfordian books are in the stacks. Oxfordian periodicals are displayed on the racks. My book and Ogburn's are sold in the gift shop. A recent exhibition included a display case on Oxford (although they got some facts and dates wrong). A UC-Berkeley professor is researching Oxford at the Folger. Charles Vere Lord Burford has lectured there. The new introduction to the Folger editions of Shakespeare is much more restrained about the authorship issue than was Louis Wright's diatribe of decades ago.

Are most of the staff at the Folger Stratfordian? Of course. They think they have the truth in their inherited belief, which they must defend. Does it serve any purpose to berate the Folger as an institution for not embracing Oxfordian scholarship? I think not. The library is open to authorship research. Might its trustees agree that the Folger is "violating or neglecting scholarship on the authorship issue"? Not a prayer.

Mr. Cain's commendable quarrel is not with a library but with those influential Stratfordian academics who feel they must continue to stonewall in the face of most persuasive evidence that Oxford was the true author of the works of Shakespeare.

Yours,

Richard F. Whalen
Past President

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THE VINDICATORS OF SHAKESPEARE

by

G. G. Greenwood
(Kennikat Press)

"The fact remains, as I have already written, that with regard to the life story of Shakespere of Stratford, as the biographers have handed it down to us, 'from the first to the last there is not one credible act in the whole of it, - not a single act indicative of a generous, high-minded, and great-souled man, not one such act that has a jot or tittle of evidence to support it.' This surely is a fact that we must all deplore. Possibly the biographers have done the man an injustice, but, if so, it is they, and not we of the 'unorthodox' school, who are responsible for it. And if it should be established that the difficulty which Hallam so strongly felt viz, in 'identifying the young man who came up from Stratford, was afterwards an indifferent player in a London theatre, and returned to his native place in middlelife, with the author of Macbeth and Lear,' is one that we are no longer called upon to contemplate, and that this man of the barren and banal life-story is not, in truth and in fact, the immortal poet whom none has dared defame, and whose shrine we all must worship, then shall amply earned the title of 'The Vindicators of Shakespeare.'"

Cincinnati Quire
(November 19 1995)
by
Owen Finsden

SOFT WARE
Discovering Shakespeare
MPC/MAC CD - ROM \$21.95

"Learning about the life and works of [Shakspeare of Stratford] on CD-ROM is likely to be the more entertaining than learning about the bard from an English Teacher. That's the idea behind Discovering [Shakspeare], a tour through the life and times of the great playwright billed as those discovering [Shakspeare] for the first time.

The CD-ROM takes you on a tour of the high sports of [Shakspeare-on-Avon and London to learn about [Shakspeare's] education, acting career, family life and such. One 30-second interviews a student at the school [Shakspeare] attended. [Shakspeare] had no documentary evidence he attended any school..... The idea is to interest the student in 16th century England and place in it."

CHRONOLOGY of the Principals in the case of Shakspeare's
of Stratford.*

- 1564 Birth
- 1566 -1581 Birth of his brothers and sisters
- Nov. 27th -1582 License for marriage of "William Shaxpere" to
Anne Whately of Temple Grafton issued. Nov. 28th
Marriage bond names "William Shagspere" and Anne
Hathway of Stratford
- 1583 Baptized daughter Sussana
- 1584 Nothing known of whereabouts or activities
- 1585 His twins Hamner and Judeth baptized
- 1586 Nothing known of whereabouts or activities
- 1587 Entanglement of father's affairs who is replaced as alderman,
- 1588 Nothing known of whereabouts or activities
- 1589 Names in legal proceedings with his father aimed at recovering his
mother's property in Wilmcote
- 1590 Nothing known of whereabouts or activities
to
- 1595
- 1596 His son Hamnet buried grant of coat of arms made to father. Evidently
made to father after initial rejection. William Wayte craves suretiss of peace
against "William Shakspeare" and three others.

*"The Myterious William Shakespeare, The Myth and the Reality"
by Charlton Ogburn, (EPM Publication Inc. 1984, p.771-781).

- 1597 May: "Willielmum Shakespeare" buys New Place, second largest house in Stratford.
 Nov: "William Shackspere" cited in Bishopgate, London as having disappeared, making collection of tax on him impossible.
 1598 Jan: Letter written from Stratford says "Mr. Shakspere" may be moved to deal in matter of tithes.
 Feb: "Wm. Shackspere" listed again as a tax delinquent in London in St. Helen's parish
 Oct: "William Shakespeare" listed again as a tax delinquent in London in St. Helen's parish.
 Richard Quiney writes letter evidently not sent to "Mr. William Shackspere" asking for loan to pay debts in London.
 Town of Stratford pays "Mr. Shaxpere" for load of stone.
 1599 As of February "William Shakespeare" is reported twenty years later by Heminge and Condell to hold ten-per-cent interest in Globe.
 May: Reported among those occupying a new house in St. Saviour parish.
 Oct: Reported as tax delinquent in St. Helen's parish who had moved to Sussex.
 Is derided in play by Jonson as Sogliardo, a rustic clown who buys the name of gentleman and coat of arms and "comes up every term to take tobacco and see new motions."

* * * * *

"The World's Most Baffling Mystery" on the pages 9-10 of this Newsletter was the first of my articles on the Shakespeare Society Newsletter Fall 1983 (Vol.19,#4). After this Newsletter, I will no longer be the Editor.

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JOIN SHAKESPEARE OXFORD SOCIETY AND RECEIVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the Shakespeare Oxford Society is to document and establish Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford (1550-1604) as the universally recognized author of the works of William Shakespeare. Each Newsletter carries articles which impart a wide range of corroborating information and commentary.

DUES

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 Nashua, N.H. 03060-5591 - Tel. (603) 888-1453 - Fax. (603) 888-6411

Submit materials for publication in the Newsletter to:

NOTA BENE: William Boyle, 208A Washington St., #9, Somerville,
 Mass. 02143, Phone: (617) 628-4258 - Fax (617) 776-7782

E-mail: wboyle@tiac.net.

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