



Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S

"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)



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"You may have read of the remarkable explorations of a Norwegian named Sigerson..."

EW. McDiarmid has a long and close association with the University of Minnesota Library and with Sherlock Holmes. 'Mac,' as he is affectionately called by anyone who has known him more than ten minutes, has given significantly of his time and energy to make the University Library, which houses the vast Sherlock Holmes collections, an outstanding institution. In 1995, the University acquired Mac's own collection of Sherlockiana.

Born in West Virginia, Mac's family lived briefly in Tennessee and Kentucky where his father, a college professor, taught. Fort Worth, Texas was home for Mac from age eight through his graduate student years at the University of Chicago. It was through his father, who collected the Sherlock Holmes stories published in *Colliers* magazines, that Mac became familiar with Holmes and later began to collect the first issues of the Baker Street Journal.

Mac began teaching at the University of Illinois after graduate school, and while there became

the Assistant Director of the Library School. In 1943, he came to the University of Minnesota to replace Professor Frank K. Walter as University Librarian and Director of the Division of Library Instruction, as the U of MN's library school was called then. In his book, *The University of Minnesota 1851 - 1951*, James Gray said of Mac, "With him began the era of cooperation with other universities and other libraries in the task of serving scholarship."* Scholarship remained a byword during Mac's University career and his long leadership of Minnesota's Sherlockians.

McDiarmid continued on page 2



Photo by David Peterson

*University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. p. 537.

Dorothy Rowe Shaw and E.W. McDiarmid at John Bennett Shaw Dedication, University of Minnesota, 1995.

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YEARS AGO

“The Press,...is a most valuable institution”

Throughout his lifetime Sir Arthur Conan Doyle expressed his opinions and debated ideas not only through books and magazines, but in the press. With fervor and yet a reasonably balanced argument, he commented on everything from agnosticism to the Witchcraft Act. Reprinted below is a letter to The Times from October 20, 1897.

Nelson Day

Sir — Might I suggest to the Navy League through your columns that they might reunite public opinion and remove every possible objection to their annual commemoration if they were to hold it on September 29, the date of Nelson's birth, instead of upon that of his death at Trafalgar? The latter, in spite of every disclaimer, must be offensive to our neighbors. If the French were annually to hold public celebrations in honour of Marshall Saxe and the victory of Fontenoy no explanations would prevent us from feeling that it was a national insult. It is un-English and unchivalrous to exult over a beaten foe. But if we kept Nelson's birthday it would answer every purpose which the Navy League has in view, and it could not be open to these objections.

Yours faithfully,
A. Conan Doyle

Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar-square,
London, W. C. 🐾

McDiarmid continued from page 1

In 1947 Mac assumed the name Sigerson as he and five others, (Theodore Blegen, Dean of the Graduate School, Wallace Armstrong and Bryce Crawford, professors of Chemistry and E. W. Ziebarth, professor of Speech and Theater), met to organize the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, a scion society of the Baker Street Irregulars. Among these friends and colleagues Mac says, “came the recognition that each was a reader, and more, somewhat devoted to the Holmes stories. It was easy to apply a little organization.” The organizational meeting was announced in the December 1947 Baker Street Journal. The first general meeting, in January 1948 — with the temperature a comfortable 20 degrees below zero (F) — was reported in the March 1948 Baker Street Journal.

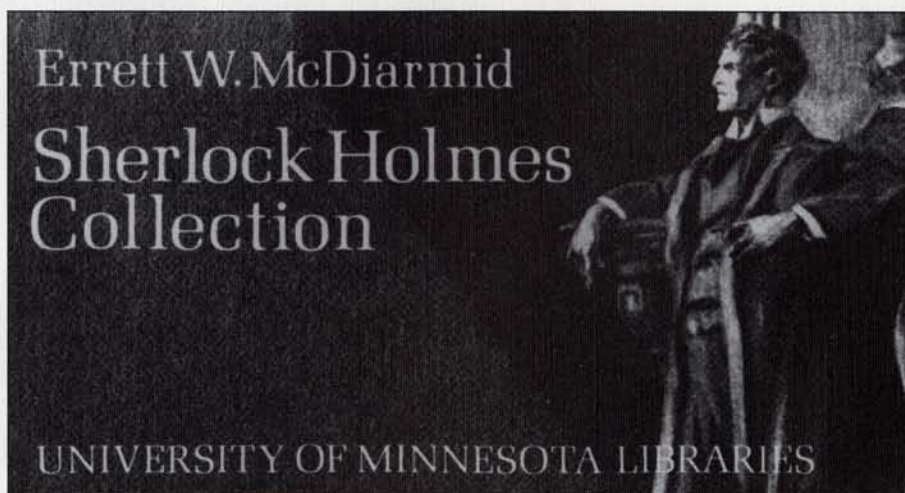
The 1950's was a busy decade. In 1951 Mac became the Dean of the College of Science, Literature and Arts (later, College of Liberal Arts) serving in this capacity until 1963. From 1951 to 1952 he was also the President of the American Library Association. It was in the 50's that some of the best of the Norwegian Explorers writing was published. In 1951, Theodore Blegen issued *The Crowded Box-Room* and in 1952 Blegen and Mac edited *Sherlock Holmes: Master Detective*, in which Mac put forth the theory that, while Holmes did survive his struggle with

Moriarty, he then retired, rarely returning to detecting during the rest of his life.

In 1957, a large plaque, planned and commissioned by the Norwegian Explorers, was placed at Reichenbach Falls to memorialize the spot where Holmes and Moriarty ‘died’ in 1891. When a waitress in Meiringen, Switzerland identified Holmes as a member of Scotland Yard, a flabbergasted Dr. Philip Hench set upon the idea of the plaque to ensure the truth of Holmes’ singularity in the world of consulting detectives. The whole story of the plaque’s creation and placement is told (along with other essays) in the 1957 publication, *Exploring Sherlock Holmes*, also edited by Mac and Blegen. According to Mac, it was during their association working on the plaque that Dr. Hench decided he wanted his collection to be housed at Minnesota.

It was also in 1957 that Mac became a member of the Baker Street Irregulars, receiving his shilling and the investiture of ‘The Bruce-Partington Plans.’

From 1963 through 1978 Mac was Director of the Graduate School Fellowship Office. It was during this time that the University of Concepcion in Chile contracted with the University of Minnesota for assistance in establishing its own graduate programs (e.g., a new library, fellowships, central administration services and language



Bookplate of E. W. McDiarmid.

labs). Mac spent two years (1965-67) in Chile as head of this project.

Mac 'retired' in 1978, though not for the relative quiet of bee-keeping. Sherlockian publications and projects continued apace. In *Cultivating Sherlock Holmes*, edited by Bryce Crawford and Joseph Connors, Mac's contribution ("Are There Others?") examines Holmes's attitude toward Watson. Two years later, Mac published a small book on another long-standing interest, the writings of Leonard Merrick. Mac owns five complete manuscripts as well as letters and first editions of Merrick's works. This collection began as a result of attending an auction as part of a bibliographic assignment in graduate school and purchasing 5 of Merrick's books (3 first editions) for \$4.00.

In 1984 Mac published *The Real Sherlock Holmes* detailing some inconsistencies found in the correspondence between Adrian Conan Doyle and William S. Baring-Gould. This correspondence (as well as Baring-Gould's papers for *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*) is part of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. 1987's collection *The Baker Street Dozen* was co-edited by Mac and Pj Doyle. It assembled Doyle's own twelve favorite Holmes stories (plus "Silver Blaze" which many feel should be included in any 'best of' anthology) with essays by well known Sherlockians. The paperback edition (1989) contains an essay by Mac and Pj Doyle that was not in the original edition.

The Baker Street Irregulars' prized Two-Shilling Award ("For extraordinary devotion to the cause beyond the call of duty") was given to Mac in 1985.

Mac continues into the 1990's to be a leader and advisor to the Norwegian Explorers and the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. At two recent conferences (1993's *Rogues, Rascals and Ruffians*, and the 1995 dedication of the John Bennett Shaw Collection), Mac was a link with both the past and the future. The fiftieth

Musings from the Writing Table...

As difficult as it is for a new author to get that first novel published, many will say that the second book carries more pressure: was the first book a fluke, do they only have one book in them, and so on. It is especially true if the initial effort was a success. This is an apt analogy for the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections newsletter as we move on to this, our second number.

Our first number was very well received; many greatly appreciated letters and e-mail messages were received. To note just a few; Mr. William Force (among many others) enjoyed the overview of each of the individual collections, and suggests future articles focus on the contents of each. Mr. David Rush from Decatur, Illinois, particularly liked the article on Doyle's home, Undershaw, and would like to see a similar piece on Doyle's subsequent home, Windlesham.

Speaking of Windlesham, a mystery in our first issue was discovered by David Hammer, author and former owner of Gasogene Press of Dubuque, Iowa. Based on his research into locations (real and fictional) associated with the Holmes adventures, he notes that, while our photo of Undershaw under construction is correct, that of

Undershaw completed is actually Windlesham! How that photo came to be marked as Undershaw is our mystery. Many thanks to Mr. Hammer for pointing this out.

Many readers suggested topics for future articles, including biographical sketches of collectors who are associated with or have made significant contributions to the Sherlock Holmes Collections. We're pleased to oblige with a feature on E. W. McDiarmid, collector, librarian and Sherlockian. Some inquired after a bit of background on the Editorial Board as well. These, and other topics under serious consideration, include the provenance of Alexandra, the Czarina of Russia's Tauschnitz edition of the *Hound of the Baskervilles*; the Collection's four manuscript pages of the *Hound of the Baskervilles*; the patter from newspapers of the day between Doyle and Max Beerbohm.

Thank you for all for your support of the Sherlock Holmes Collections and your continued interest in this trifling monograph. Any and all comments and questions will be sincerely welcomed. ♥

Bruce E. Southworth, B.S.I.
Editor

anniversary of the Norwegian Explorers will be celebrated in August of 1998, and Mac, the "one fixed point" of the Explorers and the Sherlock Holmes Collections for all of those 50 years, will be its star.

When asked to reflect on the existence of the Norwegian Explorers and the Collections, Mac said, "I was most concerned with and proud that the Norwegian Explorers tended to be more a research and scholarly rather than social group. Books that we have written while historical and good fun, also tended to be interesting in a scholarly way. We have such an opportunity to evaluate the whole spread of

Sherlock Holmes message: types of organizations, literary content, education, culture and of course, detective fiction." Currently Mac is going through scion society papers, records and publications held in the Collections. "If I were ten years younger," he said, "I'd go after a major grant and really get into it." With a bit of resignation in his voice he noted, "Well, there will be others to do the work." Though others may come along to do this work, none will equal the quality or longevity of Mac's contribution to the University, the Sherlock Holmes Collections or to keeping green the memory of the Master, Sherlock Holmes. ♥

On the Elementary Importance of the Sherlock Holmes Collections

Tom Shaughnessy
University Librarian

The University of Minnesota Library is the proud owner of arguably the largest collection of Sherlock Holmes documents and memorabilia in the world. This collection is an amalgam of several separate collections, the largest of which are those of Hench, Haycraft, Starrett, and the John Bennett Shaw collection, the latter being the most prominent of all. It is estimated that the combined collections number more than 15,000 volumes, documents, recordings, and artifacts.

At present, the Sherlock Holmes Collections are housed in the Special Collections and Rare Books department within the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota. Within the next three years, however, they will be transferred to the University's new Library Archives Center, a \$39 million facility which will be constructed on the Twin Cities Campus, overlooking the Mississippi River. Ground-breaking ceremonies for this new building were held on May 9th.

Occasionally, questions arise concerning the University's interest in this collection, and its commitment to maintaining it. These questions are as likely to come from scion society members as they are from persons associated with the University. My answer to the first question is based ultimately on the very purpose or mission of a research library. Comprehensive collections on virtually any topic attract students, scholars and researchers. It is for these individuals that research libraries exist. Moreover, the reputations of many of our leading universities depend very heavily on the quality and uniqueness of their library collections. In our view, any research library would be proud to be the home of the Sherlock Holmes collections. It is our expectation as

these collections become more widely known to the scholarly community that researchers from a variety of disciplines — cultural studies, comparative literature, history of medicine, criminal justice, psychology, sociology, history — will begin to consult them and publish research based on their contents. In addition, individuals who are enthralled by the intelligence and deductive powers of the great detective will also be attracted to the Sherlock Holmes collections and to the University of Minnesota. The Library is open to everyone, regardless of the individual's specific interest or motivation.

The tradition at the University of Minnesota's Library has never been to treat its collections as museum pieces — materials to be seen from a distance or within glass exhibit cases. Our philosophy has been that books are collected to be consulted and read. This philosophy of making collections accessible also brings with it a responsibility to be good stewards of the materials entrusted to the Library's care. This means that the obligation to maintain the Sherlock Holmes Collections and to continue their growth and development is a serious one. But it is also one in which responsibility can be shared. We expect, therefore, that those who are interested in particular collections owned by the Library will become partners with the University in developing these collections, in improving electronic access to them, in sponsoring exhibitions, and otherwise contributing to their support. It has been our experience that it is only by means of such partnerships with friends and supporters of various special collections that these collections become more accessible and attract the level of interest, use and attention they deserve.

From our perspective, therefore, the Sherlock Holmes Collections contribute in significant ways to the Library's overall prestige and its centrality to research and scholarship. It is collections such as the Sherlock Holmes that give research libraries their distinction, that differentiate one library from another, and enable them to fulfill their mission. And it is by means of such collections that the library is able to build relationships with new constituencies, including international interest communities, which might otherwise remain unknown to the Library. The University of Minnesota is honored to be the home of this extraordinary collection and we welcome all who are attracted to it. ♡



The *Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections* is a quarterly newsletter published by the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections which seek to promote the activities, interests and needs of the Special Collections and Rare Books Department, University of Minnesota Libraries.

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The Charm of Variety

John Bennett Shaw was “the nerve center of the Holmes cult.”* The University of Minnesota, as the repository of his collection, has his extensive files of correspondence. Unfortunately, the files contain only half of the conversation, that of the letters sent to Shaw. Missing are Shaw’s own letters — those of a “humble but insane collector.”* If you have a letter from John Bennett Shaw, the library is interested. Would you consider sending the original — or at least a copy — to the Collections? ♡

*quotes by JBS

“Yes, my correspondence has certainly the charm of variety,” he answered, smiling, “and the humbler are usually the more interesting.”

Sherlock Holmes
The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor

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YEARS AGO

“you will send for a hansom”

By 1947 the era of the London hansom cab was little more than a memory. In its first publication of Sherlockian material, *The Speckled Band of Boston* commemorated the importance of the hansom to Londoners in general and Holmes specifically, by calling it *The Second Cab: Fifteen Sherlockian Essays, One Sonnet and a Quiz*. The collection was edited by James Keddle, Jr. and privately printed in an edition of 300. In a letter to Beldon Wigglesworth dated June 12, 1942, James Keddle, Sr. said, “I hope we can get together the makings of an omnibus of stuff the Band has done, and as an omnibus is a kind of spacious cab, the volume should be called ‘The Second Cab’ - ‘221-B’ being the first.”

Copy number 11 of the 300 is held by the Sherlock Holmes Collections. In addition, there are copies of the *Third*, *Fourth* and *Fifth Cab* as well as *The Best of the Cabs*. Sherlockian scholars should note that the publications of *The Speckled Band of Boston* are also in the Houghton Library, Harvard College.

Vincent Starrett, in his introduction to *The Second Cab*, noted that “of the 15,000 hansom cabs that once plied the streets of London Town” only three were still in service by 1935. Said Starrett, “The point is that hansom cab business went into a tailspin when Holmes and Watson stopped using hansoms. Today only travelers by the grace of Gutenberg use them to

reach the scenes associated with Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.”

The oft quoted notion of taking, not the first, but the second cab is based only in part on the canon. Starrett continues in his introduction, “Holmes does say, in *The Final Problem* — when he is giving Watson his instructions in preparation for the flight to Switzerland — is this: ‘in the morning you will send for a hansom, desiring your man to take neither the first nor the second which may present itself.’” Even the mostly likely source for the misinterpretation, William Gillette’s play *Sherlock Holmes* (in which he also popularizes the deerstalker and the curved pipe which so many associate with the Great Detective), is truer to the original. Starrett’s introduction quotes from Gillette, “‘In times like these you should tell you man never to take the first cab that comes to call — nor yet the second — the third may be safe!’” In all likelihood, the lines were transmuted over the years, finding a secure home in the apocrypha of Sherlock Holmes. Elementary, my dear Watson!

From the Vincent Starrett Collection:

In June 1947 Starrett’s short story, “A Picture for Ronald Colman” was published in *Mammoth Detective* (volume 6, number 6). In it, a guest at an Italian hotel is murdered and an American, Richard Allison, comes under suspicion. Allison, using all the tricks from his favorite detective stories steps in as amateur sleuth. Not surprisingly, he sounds a bit like Holmes when describing the murderer, “He is a tall man, therefore, over six feet in height ... His hair is reddish-brown and has recently been cut. You will find traces of it on the chairback, there, where he rested his head. He wears horn-rimmed spectacles, and a black Homberg hat, and I rather think he is left-handed, although I do not press the point.” ♡

Remembrances

In supporting the Sherlock Holmes Collections, many donors have made contributions either in honor or in memory of special persons.

IN HONOR OF

Mildred R. Bennett
Ruth P. Dietz
Sherlock Holmes
Drs. Katz and Hartsoe
Dorothy Rowe Shaw
Dr. Ben Smith
Dr. Benton Wood, BSI
Dr. Benton Wood, BSI

IN MEMORY OF

Marlene Aig
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Holmes and Watson
Ronald M. Hubbs
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Mark your Calendars

The 1998 membership meeting of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections will occur in conjunction with the 50th Anniversary of the Norwegian Explorers, to be held August 7, 8, and 9, 1998 in Minneapolis, MN.

Sherlock Holmes Collections

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