



# Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S



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"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

## Les Klinger visits the Andersen Library

**T**he holiday season is upon us, and at least one person has suggested the perfect gift for anyone on your shopping list. Otto Penzler wrote in the Nov. 24, 2004 edition of *The New York Sun*:

...I want to tell you about the one-size-fits-all book, the one that everyone you care about in your personal and professional life needs and wants: the two-volume *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* (W.W. Norton, 1,877 pages, \$75), edited by Leslie Klinger. This is a truly remarkable set (a third volume is expected next year)... If by unfortunate chance you have people on your gift list who you think won't like this sublime work, get them out of your life. They're not worth knowing.

Les Klinger visited the Minneapolis-St. Paul area on November 11 as a stop on his book tour, and a trip to the Elmer L. Andersen Library was on his itinerary. The Norwegian Explorers were treated to a discussion of his latest literary endeavor and had an opportunity to have their own *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* signed by the editor and annotator. This was Klinger's third visit to the Twin Cities since 2001; he was a featured speaker at the Norwegian Explorers' 2001 and 2004 conferences.



Photo by Julie McKuras

Les Klinger and Pat Frovarp

The title of his talk, "Is Sherlock Holmes Alive Today," caught the attention of the group who answered his question with a resounding "yes." Les gave us his own Sherlockian background which began with the purchase of William Baring-Gould's *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes* when it was published in 1967. He was hooked on the Master Detective and hasn't looked back.

Les began his annotating career in 1998 with the publication of *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, the first of his Sherlock Holmes Reference Library. Gasogene Press of Indianapolis have now published six volumes of the Klinger's Reference Library, the latest being *The Sign of Four* in 2004, with *The Valley of Fear* set for 2005. *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* project began in 2001 when W. W. Norton Publishers Executive Editor Robert Weil decided it was time to update Baring-Gould's classic work. Weil contacted Les at the suggestion of *The Washington Post's* Pulitzer Prize winning literary critic Michael Dirda, who had published reviews of the Reference Library editions in his "Book World" column. Les noted in an interview in *Pages* that he was hesitant to take on a project that would alter Baring-Gould's classic but decided the vast amount of Sherlockian scholarship published since 1967 could only serve to enhance the original work. And as Les was quick to point out, he had one advantage that

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# 100 YEARS AGO

The instruction brochure for a game from John Bennett Shaw's collection advises the player of the "rules for playing the game of SHERLOCK HOLMES." Today we realize that any number of people require the rules for playing the game of Sherlock Holmes, but in 1904 Parker Brothers Inc. of Salem, MA and New York were more specific in their purpose. They were giving the instructions for their new game, which they described as "Pure, Laughable, Exciting Fun." The card game was "laughable, exciting, entirely new for any number" and best of all, "easily learned."

Many of us grew up playing Parker Brothers games, such as MONOPOLY, CLUE, RISK and SORRY!. George Parker, founder of Parker Brothers and the youngest of three sons, was born in Salem, Massachusetts in 1867. An "avid game player" (Hasbro website) he enjoyed traditional games of checkers, chess and dominoes. At an early age he invented the game BANKING which was based on profiting through financial speculation. Unable to sell it to book publishers, he produced it himself and made a profit of \$100.

With the encouragement of his brother Charles, sixteen-year-old George founded the George S. Parker Company in 1883. Five years later the company was doing well with 29 games, and Charles joined George to form Parker Brothers. Ten years later, eldest brother Edward joined the company. It was George who developed and tested games and wrote the rules. When the brothers' early game INNOCENCE ABROAD caught the public eye, George began the unprecedented practice of advertising in magazines and newspapers.

Parker Brothers boomed during the 1890's and 1900's when they introduced

games to a public with a burgeoning interest in "culture and education" (Hasbro website). They capitalized on trends and events of the day, marketing games based on popular novels (including Sherlock Holmes), the Gold Rush, the advent of the automobile, and military games related to the Spanish-American War. PIT, FLINCH, and ROOK are still played today. Another popular pastime debuted when Parker Brothers laminated pictures onto wood, resulting in the jigsaw puzzle. The company continued to profit throughout the years with the introduction of MAHJONGG in the 1920's and SORRY! in 1934, but it was MONOPOLY that swept the country in 1935. The company could hardly keep up with demand and at one time produced 20,000 sets a week. Today MONOPOLY is the most popular board game available and comes in a number of versions with local tournaments and a national championship held yearly. CLUE debuted in 1949 and RISK ten years later. The company always kept up with current interests and innovations, producing the NERF Ball in 1970 and electronic games in 1977.

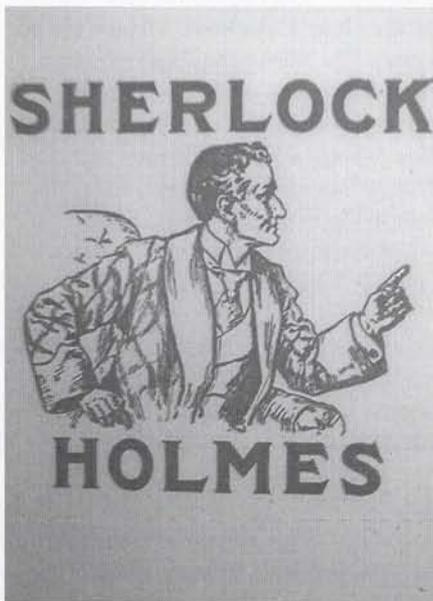


Photo by Julie McKuras

The Holmes card

George Parker died at the age of 86 in 1953 and left a legacy of over 100 games. Parker Brothers remained a family affair and was headed by Randolph P. Barton, George Parker's grandson, until his retire-

ment in 1985. Parker Brothers was bought by Minnesota's General Mills in 1968 and was subsequently a part of Kenner Parker Toys, then Tonka Corporation, which became a division of Hasbro Inc. in 1991. Headquartered in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Parker Brothers is part of the toy empire which includes Kenner, Tonka, Milton Bradley, Hasbro Interactive and Playskool.

But if you're interested in "Pure, Laughable, Exciting Fun" then it's the SHERLOCK HOLMES game for you. The card game was available for the cost of fifty cents and could be sent from Parker Brothers to any address in the U.S., Canada or England. Three to eight players can participate, playing to capture robbers, burglars and thieves cards. The entire deck is dealt and at the call of "ready - play" everyone takes their upper card and lays it face up on the table. The object of the game is to capture the other players' playing pile. When a player turns up a "SHERLOCK HOLMES" card, that name is quickly called out and the card holder may seize, or "sweep" others' piles. The game is played until a player or players have run out of cards three times. Scoring is then done by adding points for capture of thieves, robbers and burglars. A second version of the game was introduced in later years and bore the legend "Improved Edition."

Helen G. Halbach's article published in *The Baker Street Journal* noted that the game "was the rage in both England and America" from 1904 to 1923. She ended her article with the speculation that "perhaps if enough interest were shown, Parker Brothers could be persuaded to re-issue the game, or allow The Baker Street Irregulars to do so." ♡

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

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Halbach, Helen G. "Sherlock Holmes: Master of Cards" *The Baker Street Journal*. Volume 14, Number 2, 1964, 84-87.

<http://www.historychannel.com/exhibits/toys/inventors.html> website of The History Channel, A&E Television Networks

[http://www.hasbro.com/pl/page.corporate\\_history\\_pb/dn/default.cfm](http://www.hasbro.com/pl/page.corporate_history_pb/dn/default.cfm) website of Hasbro Toys

# 50

## YEARS AGO

*Editor's Note: In 1954 Bliss Austin published his "Baker Street Christmas Stocking," which he described as a "miscellany of Holmesian trivia contrived to convey Irregular Greetings at Christmas 1954." This was one of the many annual publications produced by Austin and his 1954 offering contained a brief monograph on the problems encountered when translating the Canon, a "Department of Literary Osmosis," "Prophet – Without – Honor Department" and the "Quizz Corner."*

For me, a newcomer in 1973, no one personified a Baker Street Irregular of the old school more than James Bliss Austin. At seventy, he was the picture of urbane intelligent sophistication without a trace of edge about him. He was benevolent, erudite, patient and encouraging with the young, and generous with his time, energy, and material resources. He had joined the BSI in 1944, during its golden age at the Murray Hill Hotel, and had been on close terms with Christopher Morley, Edgar W. Smith, and other giants of the BSI's first decades. His scholarship was outstanding, even famous. He held one of the first Titular Investitures conferred in 1945, "The Engineer's Thumb." He was everything a young aspiring Sherlockian could wish to emulate. And yet he gave the impression of being interested in me.

Many others had the same experience, and it was not a delusion. That was the fundamental thing: Bliss Austin was absolutely genuine.

Unlike many notable Irregulars from the arts and letters, Bliss had a scientific and industrial background. His degrees were in chemical engi-

neering, and when I met him he was a retired vice-president of U.S. Steel. Of course Sherlock Holmes was a scientific personality himself, and countless scientists have been fascinated by the Canon, like everyone else. But Bliss had a felicity with the language that many a literary man might envy. When he turned to scientific sidelights of the Canon, his prose could reach as close to perfection as anything Morley or Smith or Vincent Starrett wrote about Sherlock Holmes. My personal favorite is a letter to the Baker Street Journal in October 1947, as people contemplated the implications of the atomic bomb:

SIRS:

Judging from personal comments, as well as from published writings, a number of aficionados share the prevailing apprehension over the appalling possibilities latent in the atomic bomb, which the world must now face though it is no better prepared than it was for the Giant Rat of Sumatra. I therefore offer a suggestion which, if adopted, should deliver us from the Valley of Fear into which we have been thrust by this fantastic Oppenheimer creation. I propose that control of the bomb be entrusted to the Brothers Holmes: Mycroft to be responsible for the complex and delicate questions of policy and diplomacy, and Sherlock for all investigations into illicit production and for the removal of any would-be Moriarty who may seek to reduce our planet to the size of an asteroid in order to study its dynamics.

All agree, I am sure, that this is a work worthy of the talents of these two men, which otherwise may some day have to be devoted to preparing a monograph upon "The Distinction Between the Ashes of One Hundred and Forty Cities." It is my earnest hope that this proposal will win the approval of, and be supported by, every true believer and true man.

When John Nieminski, Don Pollock, Bill Goodrich, and I were co-editing Baker Street Miscellanea, there was no one to whom we liked to turn for material more than Bliss. We turned to him so often that you'd have thought the well would declare itself dry at some point. It never did. Each request was good naturedly and enthusiastically agreed to, and before long a draft would arrive that filled the bill superbly. More often than not, it looked like the definitive statement on whatever the subject happened to be. Bliss never squeezed a topic to a pulp, but when he wrote about something, he made that topic his. He wrote many articles for BSM, and while some of them may not have been the lead articles in their issues, most of them were.

They deserved to be. They were substantial pieces of canonical exegesis or thorough-going bibliography requiring a good deal of research. Bliss's greatest resource at such times was his own peerless collection. I've seen many first-rate Sherlock Holmes collections, some more extensive or more valuable than his. But no one else's dazzled me like his when I first beheld it at his home in Pittsburgh. It was composed of rare things, fine things, things anyone would love to have – first editions in dustjackets, the page of the manuscript of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in which Holmes makes his deductions from Dr. Mortimer's walking stick, Paget and Steele originals, the manuscripts of *The Valley of Fear* and Conan Doyle's autobiography, *Memories and Adventures*, complete runs of both the British and the American *Strands*, *Harper's* and *Collier's* runs as well, and much more. It was a collection which he was able to mine time and again for BSM, the BSJ, and his much anticipated annual *Baker Street Christmas Stockings* from his own cleverly named Hydraulic Press.

When he found he had duplicates of things, he gave them away, principally to the young. Two turn-of-the-century

*Continued on page 7*

## Acquisitions

**B**ebe F. Clayton of St. Louis, MO donated a copy of *Profile by Gaslight* along with a letter that noted "I wanted this book to be in someone's hands who would appreciate it. For those of us who are Sherlockians, Holmes will never die (no matter what Daddy tried to tell me)."

Hugo Koch donated an inscribed copy of *Best Loved Books of the Twentieth Century* by Vincent Starrett. He also included a copy of *Wellcome's Excerpta Therapeutica*. This small volume, the personal property of Vincent Starrett, includes chapters on therapeutic notes, diseases and treatments, poisoning, diet tables, terminology and other medical information. The book is signed by him as "Vincent Starrett MD" and contains a variety of clippings relating to medications, notes regarding the medical history of Starrett's wife Rachel, and two prescriptions from the desk of Dr. M. J. Latimer of Chicago.

(Ed. Note: *Henry Wellcome of Wellcome's Excerpta Therapeutica, was born in Wisconsin in 1853 and lived his early life in Garden City, Minnesota. He was a traveling salesman for a pharmaceutical company and in 1879 founded Burroughs Wellcome & Co. with his friend Silas Mainville Burroughs in London. The company registered one of the trade names: 'Tabloid' for a compressed pill. The company would eventually merge and become GlaxoSmithKline. His ex-wife Gwendoline also married and divorced Somerset Maugham.*) A small formal photograph of an unidentified man taken in the offices of Elliott and Fry of 55 Baker Street, Portman Square, London was also included. Mr. Koch has written a booklet titled "In Re:55 Baker Street with meditations on other matters evoked by the enclosures laid into a volume of *Wellcome's Excerpta Therapeutica* owned by Vincent Starrett." Mr. Koch donated copies of this booklet as well for the Collections.

Richard J. Sveum donated the conference materials from the recent BSI Valley of Fear tour including *Murderland*, the book published for the conference.

Two of Chicago's scion societies continue to be well represented in the Collections through the contributions of Don Terras. Don recently donated the guest register from Hugo's Companions Fiftieth Anniversary dinner, which was held on April 17, 1999. Don also included the September 10, 2004 61st Annual Dinner program from The Hounds of the Baskerville (sic). These items were designed by Wayne Siatt, who has been a member of both scions for many years and was the recipient of the first Hugo's Companions Paget-Steele Award honoring those who have contributed to the canon of Sherlockian art and design. ♡

## Musings

**I**'m happy to report that the Nov. 11 meeting of The Norwegian Explorers was a success. Les Klinger visited the Twin Cities and gave our local scion society the opportunity to learn more about his recently published *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, and this appearance is the subject of our lead article. No mention of Editor and Annotator Les Klinger would be complete without mentioning his *Sherlock Holmes Reference Library*, published by the Gasogene Press of Indianapolis. Now every bookshelf can house the six volumes of that Library, aimed for the Sherlockian audience, as well as the *New Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, targeted for a general reading public.

It's certainly a good position to be in when you have two interesting items to

highlight in our 50 Years Ago column. We feature a toast written by Charles O. Merriman and a Christmas booklet published by Bliss Austin. I would like to thank Shirley Purves for providing some reminiscences of her half-brother. Jon Lellenberg reports that The Sherlock Holmes Society of London and their Shameless Commerce Division offer copies of the Merriman's guide to Holmes' London for sale. Jon has also contributed his memories of Bliss Austin. Our 100 Years Ago piece gives us all a chance to have some "Pure, Laughable, Exciting Fun" with the 1904 Sherlock Holmes game. Our photos relating to those Using the Collections feature two young adults who came to visit the library, and I'm very happy that my daughter recommends such a tour to those who come to visit the Twin Cities.

Tim Johnson and Dick Sveum have both noted the passing of Elmer L. Andersen, a remarkable bookman among his many other talents. He will certainly be missed. His 95th birthday party, held this past June at the library, was well attended and indicated to all that his joy and interest in life motivated everything he did. Dick has also mentioned our December annual renewal drive. We previously contacted each subscriber yearly close to the date of their last donation. We hope that you will all choose to continue to support the wonderful Sherlock Holmes Collections.

We hope that 2005 finds you all healthy and happy, and with our good wishes. ♡

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

## From the President

**I**t is with sadness that I note the passing of Elmer L. Andersen, who was a special Friend of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. He was a great bookman who had many interests including Sherlock Holmes. He will be remembered with fondness and admiration.

It is that time of year to think about your membership renewal. As we indicated previously, The Friends of the

Sherlock Holmes will now be requesting donations on an annual basis with our December fund-raising drive. This will serve to have our entire membership on the same renewal schedule. To maintain membership as a Friend you will need to send in a contribution of at least ten dollars. The funds are used to cover the cost of *The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections Newsletter*. I hope that you will consider a much larger donation of money or material to help us reach our goal of becoming the World Center for the Study and Appreciation of Sherlock Holmes.

If you wish to make a contribution either in honor or memory of a special person it will be noted in the Remembrances column of the newsletter. A donation of ten thousand dollars entitles you to become a member of the Sigerson Society. We are also raising funds for the E. W. McDiarmid Curator Endowment and this can be indicated on the remittance envelope.

Thank you for being a member of the Friends. ♡

Richard J. Sveum, MD, BI

## Using the Collections

Megan McKuras and Roy Wyatt toured the Holmes Collections during Roy's visit to the Twin Cities. Roy, who is from New Zealand, was in Minnesota for the summer and worked as a camp counselor. ♡

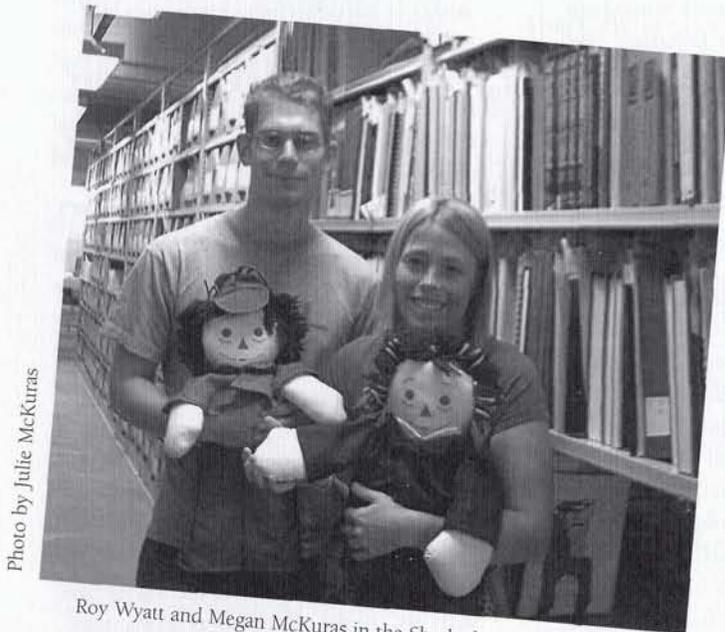


Photo by Julie McKuras

Roy Wyatt and Megan McKuras in the Sherlock Holmes Collection

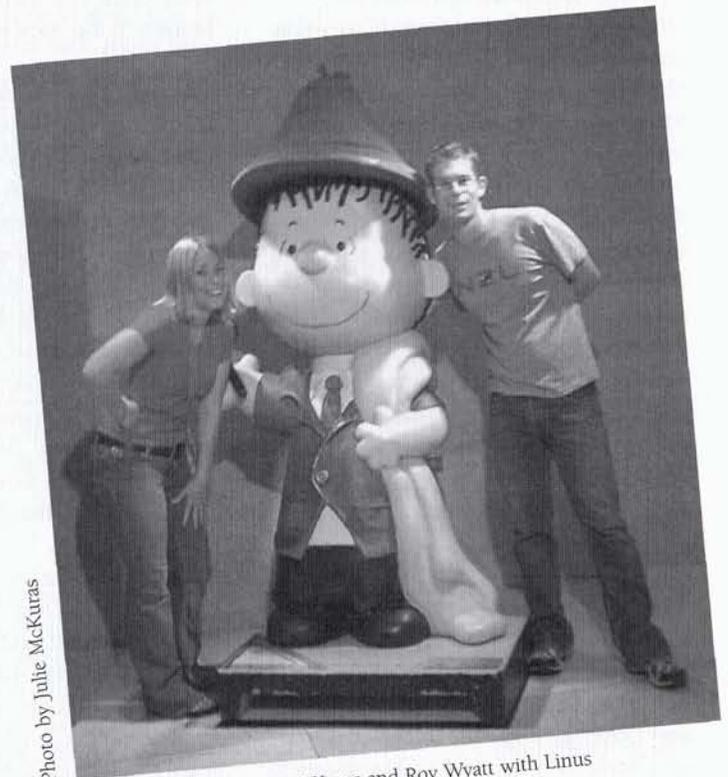


Photo by Julie McKuras

Megan McKuras and Roy Wyatt with Linus

## Les Klinger... Continued from Page 1

Baring-Gould didn't have: Baring-Gould's *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*. Les's 2,000 annotations help the 21st century reader understand Victorian English terminology and culture and the concept of "playing the game."

The effort to bring forth *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* took three years and a research assistant to help Les review over 3,000 Sherlockian references and obtain publishing rights. The finished work is over 1,800 pages long and contains all fifty-six short stories and over 700 illustrations. The introduction to the two-volume set was written by spy thriller

author John le Carre, who the *Los Angeles Times* described as "...an inveterate Sherlock Holmes fan" in the Nov. 14, 2004 issue. The third volume will include the four novels and is set for publication next fall.

Reviews of *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes* have been overwhelming positive. Les did cite one exception: Judge Richard A. Posner's review published in *The New Republic*. Posner described this "curious publishing enterprise" as his introduction to "a strange phenomenon with which I had previously been unacquainted: the cult of Sherlock Holmes." He ends his review

with "The Holmes stories and the Holmes persona seem to me wildly overrated, and this annotated edition an eccentric venture." The group was quick to disagree with this opinion, and Les clarified what Judge Posner had failed to understand: that Holmes is a symbol of "all that we would be." In a world that needs heroes, we have one in Sherlock Holmes, the embodiment of "do the right thing." The cult of Sherlock Holmes certainly agrees. ♡

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

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*The New Republic Online*, October 13, 2004.  
Pages. Nov/Dec. 2004.

## An Update from the Collections

I think it is a fair guess (or deduction) that we each have a title or two in our various collections that are special to us. They are special for any number of reasons, and as we hold these volumes in our hands memory floods with a time, or a place, or a person that makes these volumes dear and precious. We remember, and are glad that in the memory. Such is the case with two titles—both familiar to many of us—that come to my mind today: *Exploring Sherlock Holmes* and *Sherlock Holmes: Master Detective*. What is special about these volumes is, in this case, not their association with the Norwegian Explorers, or with Emerson Wulling and the Sumac Press, or that we have them in the Collections. Indeed, these particular copies reside in another collection altogether, and were donated by a bibliophile of note. They came to us from a remarkable individual, which makes them special. They belonged to Elmer L. Andersen. On Monday, November 15th, former Minnesota Governor Andersen died at the age of 95.

The Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Collection arrived a year before the formal opening of the library building that now bears his name. In April 1999, former Governor and Mrs. Andersen donated a book collection of 12,500 volumes to the University of Minnesota Libraries.

The collection—called "voluminous" by the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* and "extraordinary" by a local rare-book dealer—includes brilliantly printed limited editions, small-run private printings, and exceptional volumes from the presses of Midwest publishers and printers. The collection is wide-ranging, both in terms of authors and subjects, and includes some of the best illustrators, printers, and binders in the book world.

The collection represents a book collecting passion that began during the Great Depression and continued throughout Governor Andersen's lifetime. During an interview, this archetypal Friend of the University Libraries said that he "bought books to read and reread, to quote and refer to. He bought them to encourage small presses and struggling authors, because buying good books, he said, is the only way to ensure that more good books are written. And he bought them because he loved to sit in his library, look up at a title and recognize a friend."

We recognize the sentiment. And we celebrate his life. Over the last week much has been written, and more said, about this most amazing man. You are invited to visit our web site at <http://andersen.lib.umn.edu/tribute/> to learn more about Governor Andersen and read excerpts from his writings. For

those who wish to read more, I would recommend his autobiography *A Man's Reach* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000) or his collection of speeches and reflections, *I Trust to be Believed* (Nodin Press, 2004). Earlier this year, Governor Andersen kept busy with book signings and talks for this latest volume. Another collection of his work is in preparation. Here was a full and rewarding life! Other information, including audio files and photographs, may be found on other Internet sites.

Since the original donation, the Andersens continued to build the collection with additional gifts and purchases, bringing the collection to nearly 16,000 volumes. Many of these gifts have strengthened other collections in the University Libraries as well. I was one of many, many people whose life intersected with his. In the all-too-short seven years we had together, it was my privilege to work with Elmer, to discuss libraries, books and writers, and life in general. Those moments in his home—over coffee and cookies, and surrounded by still more books—will be a treasured memory. Stand with me, then, on the terrace and celebrate the life of Elmer Lee Andersen. And help us keep green the memory of one who meant so much to so many. ♡

Tim Johnson

## 50 Years... Continued from Page 3

items Bliss gave me hang framed on my study's walls, and others of my generation are also in his debt. When Bliss died, he left his almost all of his collection to his children and his alma mater Lehigh University. (The manuscript of *Memories and Adventures* he gave to Mt. Holyoke College, his wife's alma mater.) Two of the best items, his copy of Beeton's Christmas Annual, which had previously belonged to Vincent Starrett and Frederic Dannay, and the manuscript of *The Valley of Fear* were auctioned by Sotheby's, for hammer prices of \$52,000 and \$260,000 respectively. The rest was put up for silent sealed bids by Lehigh, and was sold to a consortium of two collectors and a dealer, for less, some felt, than the independent bids it had solicited would have brought. It left a few people bitter, because they had looked forward to possessing not only the items themselves, but things that had been in Bliss's collection. In any case it didn't reflect upon Bliss, who had assumed that everyone else behaved as well as he did.

By now, I suspect this account would be more credible if I could include some flaw, some defect, to balance the picture. The worst I can recall, though, was a piece of mischief that delighted me. It was during the cocktail hour of a BSI dinner at the Regency Hotel in the late 1970s. While people were drinking in the adjacent room, I and several others were distributing Julian Wolff's menus around the dining-room tables. I saw someone enter, an Irregular-in-waiting who always dogged Bliss's footsteps. He checked his assigned table to see if it was Bliss's, as I suppose he had requested. It was not. He found Bliss's menu, name written across the top like all of them, at another table. And then he switched his with the one found for somebody else at the place to Bliss's left. Then he left the room.

A while later, Bliss entered, and walked over to his assigned table. From across the room I saw him wince when he noticed whose menu now rested at the place next to his. And then I watched Bliss switch it for somebody else's on the far side of the table. Then Bliss left the room.

By the time the cocktail hour ended, and people were streaming into the dining room and finding their tables and seats, I had my eyes glued to Bliss. When his shadow reached the table, he was dumbstruck to find both seats next to Bliss occupied. Someone pointed to his menu at an empty space on the far side of the table, and he broke into loud but futile complaints. And all the while Bliss sat quietly, struggling to keep his face straight.

That's the worst story I know to tell about Bliss Austin. I daresay people will have much worse to say about me when I'm gone.

When Bliss was in his eighties, and the BSI reached its fiftieth anniversary, he gave a magical talk about the early BSI he had known – the men he had liked and admired, the annual dinners of those years, the excitement of seeing the *Baker Street Journal* come out for the first time. It brought those days to life for everyone in the room, and in the eyes of older Irregulars among us, there were some tears as Bliss talked about Morley and Smith and Jim Montgomery and Basil Davenport and Charlie Honce and others. When it was over, everyone declared that he must write it all up. And he said he would.

Instead he died. It was the loss of Bliss Austin which made us realize that the BSI was in danger of losing its sense of its own history. It was Bliss and what he said about those times and men that made me believe



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.

Mail editorial correspondence c/o:

Editor

Julie McKuras  
13512 Granada Ave.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124  
952-431-1934  
952-431-5965 Fax  
mike9750@aol.com

Editorial Board

John Bergquist, Timothy Johnson,  
Jon Lellenberg, Richard J. Sveum, M.D.



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a history of the BSI would be worth doing, even though it would be of interest to only a microscopically small portion of humanity. It was Bliss's example as a scholar that kept me at it when I began to suspect that it might be a tad bigger undertaking than I'd expected. And it's for Bliss for whom I write it, whose approval I seek as each volume finally comes off the press. Bliss would be the gentlest of critics; but no one in the Baker Street Irregulars who knew Bliss Austin wanted anything less than his good opinion. The fact that he's gone makes no difference. Bliss Austin will be with us until the last of us who knew him is gone too. His work will be part of our literature forever. ♡

Jon Lellenberg, BSI

# 50

## YEARS AGO

1954 was not only the 100th birthday of the Great Detective, but as Charles O. Merriman's toast to Mycroft Holmes noted in the December 1954 issue of *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, "by a happy coincidence, the centenary of Sherlock Holmes has fallen in the same year as that of Professional Accountancy...." Holmes may have disguised himself as an accountant in "The Case of the Stockbroker's Clerk," but it was brother Mycroft who had "an extraordinary faculty for figures and audits the books of some of the government departments." The purpose of Merriman's toast was to acknowledge the "regrettable lapse on the part of the accountancy profession in failing to recognise seven years earlier the centenary of his older brother, Mycroft, an eminent accountant, whose intellectual superiority was acknowledged by Sherlock Holmes. This belated acknowledgement may at least erase part of the discourtesy." Merriman wrote that Mycroft's "career as a government auditor was too prosaic for a chronicler to record for a sensation-seeking public and although references are made to the assistance given to his brother in [GREE, FINA, BRUC], Mycroft's sagas remain largely unsung."

## Remembrances

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

### IN MEMORY OF

Steve Clarkson  
Steve Clarkson  
Richard Lancelyn Green

### FROM

Laura Kuhn  
Julie McKuras  
C. Paul Martin

Another "eminent accountant" who stepped in to praise Mycroft was Charles Octavius Henry Merriman, BSI, born on Jan. 10, 1912 in Calcutta, India. He spent his childhood in India before moving to England. His younger half-sister Shirley Purves, BSI, described him as "almost a Founder member" of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London, as he was unable to attend their first meeting in 1951, but when the life-long employee of Price-Waterhouse "appeared at the second, he was immediately elected Treasurer." He was elected Chairman of the Society in 1964 but served only two years before he transferred to Zambia and later Nairobi for professional reasons. In Africa he pursued his love of birdwatching, big game fishing and the outdoors, eventually climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro. He retired from Price-Waterhouse in the mid 1970s, but it wasn't long before he took the position of Financial Director for a tea company in Malawi where he lived for ten years before returning to England.

His Sherlockian specialty, in addition to praising Mycroft, was the "identification of canonical locations and in the fifties and early sixties, he would often take off from his home in Reigate on his...bicycle with the sole intent of making a firm and detailed identification." (Purves) His early morning rambles through London, either by or by the 4:30 a. m. milk train, during that period culminated in a number of articles, complete with detailed maps and illustrations, which he wrote for *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*. The articles were reprinted in 1970 by The Sherlock Holmes

Society of London as *A Tourist Guide to the London of Sherlock Holmes* and sold for 35p. Walk Number 1 was later published as a separate brochure by the London Tourist Board. The Sherlock Holmes Collections holds copies of both of these. The 1970 publication has John Bennett Shaw's bookplate and the inscription "With Sherlockian Greetings, Charles Merriman." In addition to his own writings and as a frequent contributor to *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*, Merriman designed the book jacket for the 1960 Harper and Row edition of *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. He received his investiture as Colonel Hayter in 1963.

Charles Merriman passed away on August 28, 1993 in England and was survived by his children Charles and Bryony. Shirley remembers him as a kind older brother who saw the world and mentored her own interest in Sherlockian groups and sights. He is remembered by the larger Sherlockian community as a man who helped make the streets of Sherlock Holmes' London a reality for far away readers. Like Holmes, he had "an exact knowledge of London." (REDH) ♣

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

### References:

Merriman, Charles O. *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*. Dec. 1954, p. 2-3.  
Purves, Shirley. *The Sherlock Holmes Journal*. Winter 1993, p. 96.

**For any inquiries contact:**  
Timothy J. Johnson, Curator  
612-624-3552 or  
johns976@tc.umn.edu

**Sherlock Holmes Collections**  
Suite 111, Elmer L. Andersen Library  
University of Minnesota  
222 21st Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
Telephone: 612-624-7526  
FAX: 612-626-9353

Timothy J. Johnson, Curator

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