



# Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S

"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)



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## Norman Schatell

by Jon Lellenberg

**D**ear Sir," wrote a Union City, N.J., high school student on March 16, 1942, to Howard Haycraft, about his book *Murder for Pleasure*. "I wish to point out one minor mistake in otherwise perfectly splendid book.... Being only 17, without any cash, I have resorted to taking your book out of the Public Library. I have managed to fill 3 notebooks with interesting information taken out of *Murder for Pleasure*." He went on to point out the error politely, closing with a postscript: "P.S. Is there any chance for a Holmes addict like me gaining admittance in the Baker Street Irregulars? What would be the requirements?"

The letter, among Howard Haycraft's papers in Minnesota's Sherlock Holmes Collections,

was written by Norman Schatell. Now, that schoolboy's own later contributions to Sherlockiana are the newest addition to those Collections, news that those of us who knew the man and his work will greet warmly.

There is no record of Haycraft's reply, and World War II was already giving the intelligent, strapping youngster something else to think about. But whatever Haycraft did say, it was no discouragement to Norman Schatell's Baker Street aspirations, even though it was not until the early 1970s that he began to attend the BSI's annual dinners. When I met Norm at that time, he was a big man with a friendly face, but quiet and shy, and he might have been

*Schatell continued on page 2*



Jon Lellenberg Private Collection

# 100 YEARS AGO

The name and profile of William Gillette are familiar to Sherlockians throughout the world. He is considered the model upon whom Frederic Dorr Steele based his illustrations of Sherlock Holmes. Born on July 24, 1853 in Connecticut, William Hooker Gillette began his professional career on the stage. In 1899, he authored the play "Sherlock Holmes," and toured in the starring role of Holmes from 1899 - 1932. He also wrote "The Painful Predicament of Sherlock Holmes," which was first presented in 1905. Gillette also went on to perform on radio in the United States. On October 20, 1930, NBC broadcast "The

Speckled Band," with Gillette as Holmes. He died on April 29, 1937.

Before he became, as Doyle biographer John Dickson Carr wrote, "the living image of Sherlock Holmes," Gillette was already a noted playwright. His first play, "The Professor," was written in 1881. Two plays about the Civil War followed. In 1886, "Held by the Enemy" opened at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

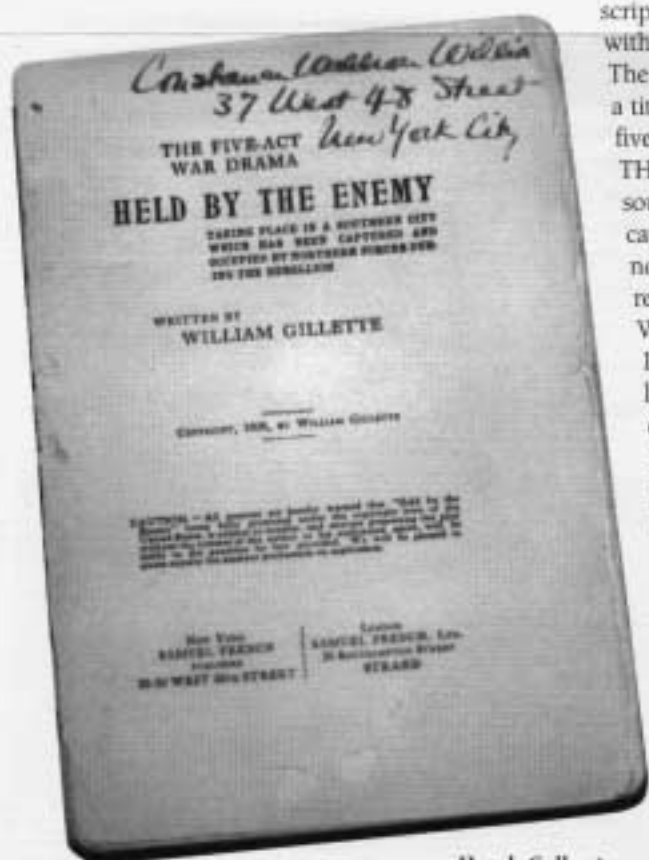
In the years that followed, a touring company presented "Held by the Enemy," although not always with Gillette. "Held by the Enemy" played in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in January 1888, December 1888, in 1889, January 1891, December 1891, July 1898, and August 1906. A second Civil War drama, "Secret Service," opened in 1895 with Maurice Barrymore as the lead.

The Sherlock Holmes Collections has a copy of the script of "Held by the Enemy," with a copyright date of 1898. The script, without a cover, has a title page which reads "The five-act war drama HELD BY THE ENEMY taking place in a southern city which has been captured and occupied by northern forces during the rebellion." Written by William Gillette, copyrighted 1898, the script was published by Samuel French, offices in New York and London. At the top of the page is an address - Constance Waldron Williams, 37 West 48 Street, New York City. This 100 year old script came to the Collections from the Phillip Hench Collection. Also in the Collections is a copy of an April, 1911 program from the play. ♣

*Schatell continued from page 1*

overlooked had it not been for a keen sense of humor that his shyness could not repress. He was older than he appeared, we found. Most of us took him at first to be in his thirties, and I remember my surprise later when Norm produced a number of old mystery book reviews, clipped from Australian newspapers in 1943 and '44, by "Dr. Watson, Jr." [Richard Hughes, founder of the BSI's Baritsu Chapter.] Wherever did he get them, I asked. When he was "out there" during the war, he answered. What were you doing there, I asked, imagining him to have been a toddler at that time. "I was in the Marines," he replied, rather bewildered by my stupefied reaction.

Norm was interested in Sherlock Holmes in theater, pastiche, and other forms; he was fascinated by Sherlock Holmes as a cultural phenomenon, including the way Baker Street Irregulars and others celebrated him. But he was an art teacher, and it was as an artist that he proceeded to astonish and delight the Baker Street Irregulars. However quiet his manner, when he combined his zany sense of humor and his artistic talents with his intimate knowledge of Sherlock Holmes, the results were hilarious and wonderful. His Season's Greetings for 1975, for example, was a set of drawings titled "The Arts & Crafts Holmes" — half a dozen items from pages and pages of ideas he had jotted down — providing text, cross-section diagrams with instructions on how to make them, and drawings of the finished products, for such whimsies as "The Late Professor Moriarty Oscillating and Magnetic Automobile-Dashboard Goodluck Figure," "The Wonderful Dog that Did Nothing Snapback Demonstrator," with a miniature fire hydrant at one end where the dog did nothing, and "The Holmes-Roylott Trick Poker," in five hinged sections. ("Electrify Your Scion!")



Hench Collection

Norm's work was very popular (the good deal of it that *The Baker Street Journal* and *Baker Street Miscellanea* published never satisfied demand), and he was unfailingly generous with his time and talent. I don't suppose anyone importuning him for a piece of art for a letterhead or a scion society dinner programme, or for a cartoon or illustration for their publication, was ever disappointed. One benefit of being a correspondent of Norm's was his habit of illustrating the outsides of envelopes in which his letters or artwork were enclosed. His envelopes, usually resplendent in bright colors, could be awe-inspiring — God knows what the Post Office thought, especially when Norm drew Sherlock Holmes stamps of his own alongside the ones it issued. Occasionally an idea of his there was the genesis of a longer set of drawings later, such as his inspired "Anthropological Holmes" published in *Baker Street Miscellanea*, with Sherlock Holmes Easter Island monoliths, African ritual objects of all kinds, Northwest Pacific totem-poles, and so on.

Behind the humor sometimes were deeper reflections about the Canon, like his drawing of Sherlock Holmes as Don Quixote, with Dr. Watson on a donkey as Sancho Panza, contemplating a windmill with Professor Moriarty's malevolent head of at the hub of its blades. And behind the cartooning was deep appreciation of serious art on Norm's part. Probably Norm's various gifts were never shown to more advantage than in his slide-show about Sherlock Holmes's chance meeting with, and influence upon, a young Spanish painter of unconventional vision, a presentation culminating with superlative pastiches of Pablo Picasso's art, incorporating Sherlockian motifs of all kinds. Norm's arresting

*Schatell continued on page 4*

# 50

## YEARS AGO

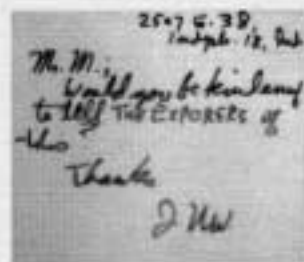
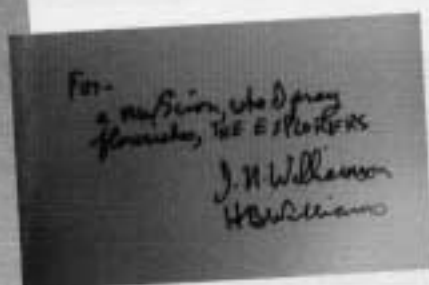
As the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota look forward to their 50th Anniversary Conference and Celebration this summer, we look back to a scion society that was already in existence in 1948. The Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis published the first of their case-books that year.

*The Client's Case-Book*, published by the Illustrious Clients of Indianapolis, was edited by J. N. Williamson and H. B. Williams. This 67 page, illustrated booklet contains a foreword, titled "In Lieu of a Foreword," by Vincent Starrett. The authors who contributed articles were Maryester Williamson, Jane Throckmorton, Ben Abramson, H. B. Williams, Jay Finley Christ, J. N. Williamson, Helen Howard, C. R. Andrew, Irvin C. Cole, Chris

Hamilton, Edgar W. Smith, Bernard L. Doll, Helene Yuhasova, and Dorothy Gray. As Christopher Redmond stated in his book, *A Sherlock Holmes Handbook*, the *Case-Book* considers matters such as "Watson's middle name and Holmes's prowess at boxing."

The Sherlock Holmes Collections is fortunate to have a copy of this *Case-Book* from John Bennett Shaw, as well as two from the collection of E. W. McDiarmid. The *Case-Book* shown in the illustration is from McDiarmid's collection. In this booklet, the editors inscribed "For - a new Scion, who I pray flourishes, THE EXPLORERS," and is signed J. N. Williamson and H. B. Williams. A note inserted into the *Case-Book* was forwarded, along with the booklet, to McDiarmid. The note reads "Mr. M. Would you be kind enuf to tell THE EXPORERS of this? Thanks, J. N. W."

Since that auspicious beginning, The Illustrious Clients have gone on to publish additional case books. And with the good wishes of J. N. Williamson and H. B. Williams, The Norwegian Explorers, guided by E. W. McDiarmid and others, have flourished these past fifty years. ♥



Notes to Dr. E. W. McDiarmid

McDiarmid Collection



Schatell continued from page 3

imitations of Picasso's styles, and his straight-faced delivery of this appealing fantasy, had more than one audience going before it realized that this was another product of his fertile imagination.

Norm and his wife Diana lived in Cliffside Park, N.J., atop the Palisades across the Hudson River from New York. There, along with Irving Kamil, Harlan Umansky, and others, he created one of the BSI's more charming scion societies, Mrs. Hudson's Cliffdwellers. This is a scion with a good deal of light-hearted ritual, and for it Norm designed and made ritual objects (the anthropological urge surfacing again) such as "The Official Mrs. Hudson Paddle" on a staff, to be carried into the meeting chamber by the presiding Cliffdweller, and a life-size geometric bust of Sherlock Holmes used in the ritual rotation of the Bust. Elsewhere around the country are other objets d'art designed by Norm for his friends, including my favorite (not owned by me, alas), The Mycroft Holmes Roly-Poly.

Everything Norm drew, including ferocious Canonical villains, even the poisonous dwarf Tonga, was rendered in a kind spirit.

Norm was a kind and gentle soul who truly loved the Sherlock Holmes stories. Sherlockians loved him back. He became "Jonathan Small" in the BSI in 1978. It was a terrible blow not only to his family but his Irregular comrades when Norm fell seriously ill at the end of the '70s. A brain tumor robbed him of his creativity, and then took his life. I don't suppose we will ever see his like again, and many of us still feel the loss despite the years that have passed since his death in 1980.

His prolific work is scattered across the country, but this donation to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at Minnesota means that there will be a permanent home for some of it. My holdings of his work are important to me for their own sake, and as a special instance of the rich personal associations which are the true value of Sherlockiana, but they will go to Minnesota eventually, where they can be protected, and enjoyed by others for many years to come. I hope the Norman Schatell Collection at Minnesota will be the nucleus of a much larger and more



Schatell Collection

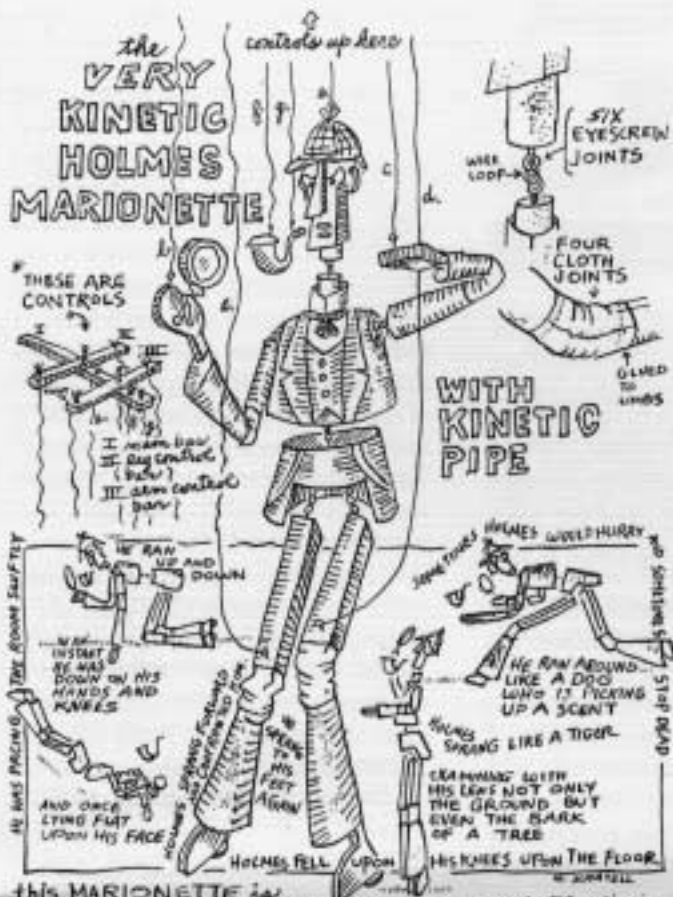
comprehensive one in time, for his contributions stand as something special in Baker Street Irregularity, and as witness to a singular talent.



Schatell Collection



Hench Collection



this MARIONETTE is DEAPOLLO 18" high. He carries an extremely small but functioning smoking pipe and is accompanied wherever he goes by an attendant small but likewise functioning Calabash pipe. A wife, sister, mother, daughter or girl friend may wear a diminutive deerstalker hat. You will also need various pieces of easy to saw and whittle wood, hammer and a few tiny 1/8" blades, coping saw, file, whittling knife, wood chisel, eyescrews, wire loops, cloth, scissors, glue, sandpaper, paint and brushes, hand drill and drills, a few inches of steel, two lead weights for the heels, black ribbon, corking and string. Also Salpa & a

Jon Lellenberg Private Collection



Jon Lellenberg Private Collection



Jon Lellenberg Private Collection



Schatell Collection

# Frederic Dorr Steele

by Andrew Malec

**F**rederic Dorr Steele (1873-1944) arrived in New York City in 1889 where he first found work as an architectural draughtsman while he studied drawing. By 1897 he had established himself as a free-lance professional illustrator, his work appearing in such leading periodicals as *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, *The Century*, and *McClure's*.

Steele's efforts caught the eye of Richard Harding Davis who suggested Steele illustrate Davis's new novel, *In the Fog* for *Collier's Weekly* in 1901. Steele's celebrated drawings for the *Return of Sherlock Holmes* series soon followed in the periodical between 1903-1905, still the chief basis of his fame in the Sherlockian world. Steele also helped solidify the American actor William Gillette as the premier stage Sherlock Holmes of the day by selecting Gillette as his model for the great detective.

- Steele was to illustrate most of the subsequent Holmes tales in their initial American periodical appearances and his work was frequently reprinted in newspapers as well. Additionally, Steele did some publicity work for the farewell tour of Gillette's *Sherlock Holmes* beginning in 1929 and for the 1939 Basil Rathbone film *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. He became an early member of The Baker Street Irregulars and made several literary and pictorial contributions to the classic Sherlockian anthologies.

Steele's career began to decline after World War One and though this was probably most due to general changes in the magazine publishing business he often blamed it on having become type cast as a detective story artist. Nevertheless, late in life he accepted a commission for a completely Steele-illustrated edition of the Canon from The Limited Editions Club but died

before completing more than a small portion of the work (the set subsequently was published with drawings by Steele and other artists).

There were a number of important Steele materials in the Philip S. and Mary Kahler Hench Collection donated to the University in 1978. These include some of the drawings Steele did for the Limited Editions Club project, the 1939 *Hound of the Baskervilles* film and a file of letters from Gray Chandler Briggs to Steele dealing in part with Briggs's famous identification of 221B Baker Street. The Steele holdings were greatly enhanced in 1986 through the generous bequest of the artist's children Anne Steele Marsh, Zulma Steele Grey and Robert G. Steele. Included in their donation

were portions of Steele's personal correspondence and photographs, typescripts of some of his writings, various original drawings (though few Sherlockian) including a number of his little-known portraits in red chalk or charcoal, a representative sample of his engravings, memorabilia reflecting various aspects of his career including his exhibitions, and a selection of books and periodicals in which

his work appeared (including his personal copies of several cornerstone Sherlockian works).

The Steele holdings have been further enriched through additional donations, notably from Dr. John P. Crotty of Saint Louis (including Steele's side of the Steele/Briggs correspondence) and from the antiquarian book dealer Peter Stern. Many other Steele-related items can be found in the other Sherlock Holmes Collections maintained by the University, including of course the enormous John Bennett Shaw Collection and the Vincent Starrett archive. Together they form the leading resource for studying the career of Frederic Dorr Steele and tracing his influence on the evolution of the Sherlock Holmes legend. ♣



*The Creeping Man*, Steele Collection



## Musings

**O**ur thematic approach continues this month as we emphasize aspects of the Sherlock Holmes Collections that deal with Holmes in art. Holmes has said that art in the blood is likely to take the strangest forms. It is equally true that Holmes in art may take some strange forms. As represented in this issue, Holmes is seen as both a Picasso subject and Don Quixote. (Of course these are relatively tame compared to his incarnation as a large chocolate bunny now locked in a deep freeze in the caverns of the University!)

As we have been fortunate to do in previous issues, we highlight a Sherlockian collector whose material has come to the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota. At the end of 1997, Norman Schatell's widow Diana and the couple's children delivered corre-

spondence and artwork of Norman Schatell to the Collection. Jon Lellenberg has provided a delightful and heartfelt review of Schatell's career and artwork. Last January by the way, Jon was anointed official historian ("Thucydides") of the Baker Street Irregulars.

Continuing our 'Holmes in Art' theme, Andrew Malec, who worked tirelessly with the Collections and produced publications of the highest quality on William Gillette and Frederic Dorr Steele (among others), reviews the Library's Steele material and looks at the career of America's best Holmesian artist.

Speaking of art, an original "Peanuts"™ comic strip has been donated by artist Charles Schulz for auction at the first annual Friends meeting which will take place in conjunction with

Founders' Footprints conference honoring the 50th anniversary of the Norwegian Explorers. Also donated is a woodblock print by George Overlie who illustrated the *Match Wits* with *Sherlock Holmes* books and also designed the conference poster.

Haven't registered yet? Contact Julie McKuras at Mike9750@aol.com or 13512 Granada Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124.

Letters from subscribers continue to come in with compliments, suggestions and corrections. All are welcome as we try to make this newsletter both interesting and accurate. There are few groups, if any, like Sherlockians for keeping one honest. ♡

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

## From the President

**W**e look forward to seeing everyone at the Annual Membership Meeting of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections on August 7, 1998. The Collections will be on display with an exhibit of art as well as treasured items and books featured in this newsletter.

The University of Minnesota Special Collections was pleased to receive all the papers, letters and artifacts that make up the archives of the Norman Schatell Sherlock Holmes Collection. The archives were given in memory of Norman Schatell and donated by Diana Schatell, Glenn Schatell and Amy Schatell Miller. To quote Diana Schatell, "I hope that many Sherlockians will be able to see these items and derive great pleasure from them."

I especially enjoy seeing the different parts of the Collections connect. Norman Schatell's letter to Howard Haycraft. John Bennett Shaw's Christmas greeting featuring Norman Schatell envelope art. It pleases me that the Norman Schatell Collection joins with the Howard Haycraft and John Bennett Shaw Collections in their permanent home in Minnesota to be protected and enjoyed by others.

We are always looking for benefactors. We would like to be the Central depository for all scion society publications as well as any and all John Bennett Shaw correspondence. We always need money to support ongoing projects and programs. Have a good summer, see you in August. ♡

Canonically yours,  
Richard Sveum, MD.



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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## Remembrances

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

### IN HONOR OF

Ted Bergman  
Dr. E. W. McDiarmid, BSI  
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### IN MEMORY OF

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John Bennett Shaw  
Dr. Richard M. Sturtz

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Joseph W. Moran, BSI  
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Anders Wiggstrom  
William R. Sturtz

## 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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### Mailing list corrections requested—

Because of the high cost of returned newsletters, we would appreciate being informed of changes of address or other corrections.

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