50 Years Ago...Continued from Page 3

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The True Stories of Celebrated Crimes: Adventures of the World’s Greatest Detectives

The contentedly married Dr. Watson...
touring companies. He also noted: “When a company manager leased a play, he was sent only one copy of the entire play. Thibaux for the director. This is one of those copies. The manager also received a set of parts: One part for each role. The part had only the individual actor’s cues and lines rather than the entire script. This made the memorization of lines much easier and faster. Many of these companies performed five or six plays in rotation. Typically, they would perform the plays during one week, and then move to the next town.

Shaw was active in the Baker Street world’s finest collections of Holmesiana. Sherlock Holmes and soon had one of the famous British author we both admired, Shaw’s first major book collection was of Chicago campus when his team won. feet, and actually played on Notre Dame’s man, Shaw nevertheless was light on his feet, and even played on Notre Dame’s team. He also bought and managed Tulsa’s finest newspaper. He was interested in the Irregulars’ journal. Happily it is an original, with two copied pages from the primary script. The Sign of Four is an original, with two copied pages from the primary script held by the museum. It features the canonical characters, with a few mis-spellings, and concludes with Holmesian statements: “You have saved the mystery of Wiggins — and for the woman I love.”

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Julie McKean, ASH, BSI

The Sign of Four... Continued from Page 1

Remembering John Bennett Shaw
By Martin Gardner

My best friend during my high school days, then and thereafter, was John Shaw, the legendary book collector and Sherlock Holmes scholar. I cannot now recall how we met. It was an unlikely event because John, a devout Catholic, attended a Catholic school while I, raised parochial school in Tulsa. Gardner had dropped out of Chicago Theological Seminary and was there. Gardner had a good relationship. This was the first popular annotated work of literature, and spurred many similar works. Gardner knew W.S. Baring-Gould, who worked at Time-Life, Inc., and introduced him to Potter; in 1962 Baring-Gould and his wife, Gardner published The Annotated Mother Goose. And of course Baring-Gould went on to do The Annotated Sherlock Holmes for Potter, published in 1967.

While he attended Tulsa Central high school, John Bennett Shaw was at a parochial school in Tulsa. Gardner does not recall how they met, but they became fast friends and Shaw was a frequent visitor to Gardner’s home. Gardner’s family could afford a home tennis court and Shaw was a fine tennis player. Oddly, Gardner never met Shaw’s parents.

As their undergraduate days ended they got together, in 1937, for a summer of directed reading. Two authors among many they concentrated on were Doyle and Chesterton. At this remove Gardner remembers bringing, Doyle to the table, and Shaw Chesterton whom the Notre Dame alumni admitted. They ordered a copy of Vincent Starrett’s Private Life of Sherlock Holmes. Gardner wrote to Starrett about his claim that the color of Holmes’s eyes was unknown; Gardner knew they were grey. No record of this correspondence survives, but Shaw once said in an interview that he and Gardner often met with Starrett when they haunted Chicago bookstores together in the 1930s. (Gardner does not recall this, though he does recall other encounters with Starrett.)

Shaw was now married to the redhead Margaret, who Gardner recalls was every bit as witty as Shaw himself. The Shaw household was a meeting place of the literary and liberal crowds of Tulsa. Gardner recalls meeting William Saroyan there, as well as the occasional fellow-traveler. Gardner was not in Tulsa long, going on to Chicago and New York, eventually working on the children’s magazine Humpty Dumpty.

Gardner’s first true Sherlockian piece was “The Missing Walnuts,” a Humpty Dumpty story that was reprinted in Ellery Queen’s Mystery Magazine in 1942. (Dr. Narry, BSI, “The Dying Detective,” was an acquaintance.) Next was a Sherlockian allusion in The Mysterious Trunks, printed in the Arrow Book of Brains Teasers, 1959 (the justification for this article). In 1960 he released his best-selling book, The Annotated Alice, published by Clarkson Potter, with whom Gardner had a good relationship. This was the first popular annotated work of literature, and spurred many similar works. Gardner knew W.S. Baring-Gould, who worked at Time-Life, Inc., and introduced him to Potter; in 1962 Baring-Gould and his wife, Gardner published The Annotated Mother Goose. And of course Baring-Gould went on to do The Annotated Sherlock Holmes for Potter, published in 1967. Shaw owned a book called Famous Single Poems, by Burton Stevenson, that inspired Gardner’s life-long interest in single-poem poets. So when Gardner produced his Annotated Casey at the Bat, he was familiar to Shaw by including in his book references to the Kansas town Mooreville, (Mudville) which had been mentioned in “The Three Garridebs.”

Gardner spent 25 years at Scientific American as consulting editor, for popular exposition of mathematics. His tireless efforts against pseudoscience have made him the father of science fiction. He also wrote more than 75 books, from philosophy to Oziana, mathematics to Chesterton, pseudoscience to poetry, magic to religion. And he has written about Sherlock Holmes.

In his unpublished memoirs, Gardner, now 95, writes about a high school experience.

One day an English teacher asked everyone in class to say what book they had most enjoyed during the past few months. She expected us to name such novels as Moby Dick or Vanity Fair, which had been assigned reading, but when it came to me I said The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes. Everyone in the class except the teacher who looked a bit puzzled.

Gardner was quoted in the Tulsa Tribune, when just 12, asserting Holmes was his favorite.

After that summer Gardner and Starrett roomed together in New York City, when Shaw went to graduate school there. Gardner had dropped out of Chicago Theological Seminary and was hoping to break into the free-lance market. After four months, with his funds depleted, having sold nothing he had written, they parted company, and Gardner returned to Tulsa and to a series of mundane jobs and Navy service. In 1948 Gardner, still free-lancing, wrote about Shaw for the Tulsa Magazine, after Shaw had returned to Tulsa and was operating a successful bookstore.

Continued on page 8
The Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota was welcomed as a new member of the Sigerson Society, created to honor donors who contribute ten thousand dollars in gifts or pledges to The Sherlock Holmes Collections.

John Bergquist, BSI gave the keynote address titled The Manuscript of The Adventure of the Three Students and its Publication in Facsimile, based on the presentation he gave at the Arthur Conan Doyle symposium at Harvard in May. The silent auction was a great success, with all money going to the E.W. McDermid Curatorship Endowment.

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Susan Diamond contributed several items of interest prepared for the 50th Running of the Chicago Silver Blaze: number 73 of 111 of her History of the Race; number 49 of 110 of Congratulations from Sherlockian Icons, and the special commemorative pin issued for the events held October 31st and November 1st of this year. Also, John Bergquist donated the printer’s proof for Two Celebrations, edited by Candace Lewis, the race handbook he produced for the Baker Street Irregulars.

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Musings

We’re pleased to welcome four new writers to this issue of our newsletter: Dana Richards writes about Martin Gardner, in recognition of Gardner’s 95th birthday; Emily Teas gives us a day in the life of a Gardnerian writer; and a fascinating look at Gardner’s career as a writer of science fiction.

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This year has been a time of travel to and from the Collections. We saw a number of groups, families, classes, and individual visitors to the Library, to see the exhibits, learn about our holdings, and explore those riches. At the same time, we found ourselves traveling to other places — to share our own experiences and to learn from others working in the same vineyard. Last November found us in Regina, Saskatchewan, delivering papers and sharing panel discussions at the University’s Doyle symposium. In January we were in New York and the annual birthday gathering of the Irregulars. The high point of the year was my visit to London and Portsmouth in February and March with fantastic opportunities to explore collections and develop new relationships. The year of travel was capped off with the delightful Doyle symposium at Harvard in May.

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And we continue to look for new ways to share the collection with our others. Our expanded roster of finders of archi- val collections and the upcoming Media Repository, to be launched in 2010, will allow us to measure many of the audiovisual resources from the Collections. We expect that the forthcoming movie Sherlock Holmes will draw further attention to the Library and our Holmes resources; interviews have already been given to Public Radio’s “Studio 360” program and the Associated Press. The University’s Media Relations department is also working with us to provide additional exposure of the Collections. And, of course, our next conference in 2010 will give us a chance to share more of the collections — through exhibits and programs — with our Friends and the public.

In the end, we are in a strong position in terms of finances, collections, and the continuing dedication of you our Friends. We can’t do what we do without you. Through your involvement as volunteers, board members, newsletter authors and editors, and donors of money and materials you are moving us along our way to become the world’s center for the study and appreciation of our most famous consulting detective, Sherlock Holmes. Thank you! And best wishes for the coming year! 

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In late November, Associated Press reporter Jeffrey Baeren and photographer Dawn Villella toured the Sherlock Holmes Collections. Baeren interviewed Tim Johnson, Duck Sveum and Julie McKuras for a planned article to run in conjunction with the release of the movie Sherlock Holmes in December.

The Sherlock Holmes Collections have seen a slight surge in interest with the upcoming release of the film Sherlock Holmes. Good or bad as it might be, it’s always a pleasure to see reporters and photographers visiting the library. We all hope that everyone has a good holiday season, and that we’ll see many of you in New York next month.

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From the President

The Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections annual membership meeting occurred on November 19, 2009. As Mike McKuras noted in his article about it, officers were re-elected, we welcomed Tim Reich as a new board member and thanked Phil Bergem for his many years of dedicated service on the board. It was my pleasure to present Tim Johnson with the Bryce L. Crawford, Jr. Award for the best article in the Friends Newsletter in 2009. He also delivered the State of the Collections Address.

Acquisitions

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Next year’s annual membership meeting will take place on August 6, 2010 in conjunction with The Spirits of Sherlock Holmes, an international conference at the Andersen Library from August 6-8, 2010 sponsored by the Friends, the University of Minnesota Libraries and the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. As 2009 comes to an end, please consider a generous donation of time and material, not just money. We are thankful for all our Friends. With your help we will make The Sherlock Holmes Collections a World Center for research and study of all things Sherlockian.

Richard J. Swiem, M.D., BSI

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YEARS AGO

The Gardner-Shaw Connection

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In his unpublished memoirs, Gardner, now 95, writes about a high school experience.

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Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections

Remembering John Bennett Shaw

By Martin Gardner

My best friend during my high school days, then and thereafter, was John Shaw, the legendary book collector and Sherlock Holmes scholar. I cannot now recall how we met. It was an unlikely event because John, a devout Catholic, attended a Catholic school while I, raised Protestant, was at Notre Dame.

Chicago is not far from Notre Dame, so there were many happy get-togethers in the Windy City. We enjoyed dining at Chicago’s top restaurants, and exploring the city’s rare bookstores. A heavy-set man, Shaw nevertheless was light on his feet, and actually played on Notre Dame’s tennis team. I attended one match on the Chicago campus when his team won.

Shaw’s first major book collection was of the writings of Gilbert Keith Chesterton, a famous British author we both admired, especially for his Father Brown mysteries. Shaw later gave his collection to Notre Dame. It contains many rare items such as a never-published set of drawings G.K. did for Wilkie Collins’s novel The Moonstone.

After G.K. Shaw turned his attention to Sherlock Holmes, and had had his hand in the world’s finest collections of Holmesiana Shaw was active in the Baker Street irregulars. Decades later, when I lived in Manhattan, Shaw would invite me to the annual irregular banquets. On January 9, 1971, Shaw was the after-dinner speaker. His talk was titled “To Shove or To Censor: some disturbing thoughts about, and distinguishing evidence from, the Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon. “It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.” It opened with a quote from John Shaw saying that he had reread the entire Sherlock Holmes Canon.”

In addition to collecting, Shaw somehow managed to hold down several jobs in Tulsa. Margaret’s family owned a funeral home. After her father jumped to his death out of a hospital window, John took over the management of the funeral home. While he even did, his home’s ambulance! [name?] I remember him telling me about having to take a badly wounded person to the hospital after a bad traffic accident.

He also bought and managed Tulsa’s finest new-books and records shop. My article, “Tulsa Fabulous Bookman,” appeared in The Tulsa Tribune, when just 12, asserting Holmes was his favorite.

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The True Stories of Celebrated Crimes: Adventures of the World’s Greatest Detectives

Y E A R S A G O

The True Stories of Celebrated Crimes

The contentiously married Dr. Watson wrote in “A Scandal in Bohemia” that his own “complete happiness, and the home-centered interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment” had caused him to drift apart from Sherlock Holmes. Watson was aware, though, of one “vague account” of his friend’s activities, and that was Holmes’s “summons to Odessa in the case of the Trepoff murder.”

A Scandal in Bohemia occurred in March 1888. Twenty-one years later, journalist and author George Barton’s The True Stories of Celebrated Crimes: Adventures of the World’s Greatest Detectives was published by McKinlay Stone and Mackenzie of New York. One true story Barton recounts is the adventure of “General Trepoff and the Russian Students,” an investigation set in March 1887. John Bennett Shaw had a copy of this book in his collection.

George Barton was born in 1866 in Philadelphia and joined the staff of the city’s Evening Star when he was seventeen. Within two years he assumed the role of city editor. By the age of twenty-one, in 1887, he was employed by the Philadelphia Inquirer, serving as political editor and legislative correspondent. He was active in the American Catholic Historical Society, and eventually worked for several other newspapers as well as secretary to the collector of customs of the Port of Philadelphia from 1898 to 1913. He wrote a number of books related to true crimes and mysteries, as well as historical works, including one detailing the work of Catholic nuns during the Civil War. He died in Philadelphia in March 1940.

The book includes fifteen chapters of true crimes and the police officials who solved them. Barton wrote in his introduction, “With the exception of necessary liberties in construction and a few pardonable embellishments, these stories may be accepted as a series of real human documents.” He also noted that “It is a fact, nevertheless, that the raw truth often possesses greater human interest than the most polished fiction.” “General Trepoff and the Russian Students” recounts the story of Trepoff’s investigation into a nihilist threat to the Czar’s life in the early part of March 1887. Trepoff was in “control of the secret service department of the police of St. Petersburg, during the lawless period extending from 1875-1880.” Barton describes M. Trepoff as “a typical example of the Russian policeman — cold, remorseless, and as inexcusable as fate.” He also noted that Trepoff was “successful in this difficult position because he won the warm commendation of the Czar, and at the same time, the hearty detesment of the people.... Vera Zassollic, a young nihilist, shot at him while he was seated at his office in the early part of 1880.” Despite his personality flaws, Trepoff’s detective skills and instincts enabled him to capture the potential assassins and prevent the Czar’s death, which was planned for March 13, 1887.

We know who General Trepoff was but who was the Trepoff named in “A Scandal In Bohemia”? In “Scandalous Bohemian Names,” Chapter Seven in Sherlock Holmes, A Study in Scrooges, Donald A. Redmond writes of the Trepoff murder which was the reason for Holmes’s summons to Odessa:

Christopher Redmond

The book includes fifteen chapters of true crimes and mysteries, as well as historical works, including one detailing the work of Catholic nuns during the Civil War. He died in Philadelphia in March 1940.

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100 Years Ago...Continued from Page 2

Whatever the confusion is regarding which Trepoff was shot by whom, we know that neither father nor son died in 1887 or early 1888 when Holmes was summoned to Odessea. Holmes’s summons there must have been interesting, and the name Trepoff very similar to the shooting of Dmitri by Vera Sassoulitch because he had her fiancé publicly flogged for failing to salute her fiancé publicly flogged for failing to salute. George Pavlovitch.” George Pavlovitch. This article combined an attack on Doyle’s stories with a review of his work. Published in Baker Street Miscellany, the story is about a meeting of Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown. Gardner’s review is written far more about Chesterton than Shaw ever did, including the Annotated Innocence of Father Brown and his new The Fantastic Fiction of G. K. Chesterton. Published by the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, which includes the Mayer reviews.

Finally in 1906 Gardner published the panicky Visions from Oz to celebrate the centenary of Baum’s original work. It contains a character named Sheerluck Brown, with roots to Doyle and Chesterton. But there is another interesting tid-bit. There is a cameo by Carroll’s White Knight who sings the poem, “When you are tired of me, sing me a song,” to celebrate the centenary of Baum’s original work. The story is about a meeting of Sherlock Holmes, a rival of Shaw amongst Chesterton collectors, and his new friend. The modern skeptical movement, which began in the 1920s with Hugo Gernsback, editor of Weird Tales, and which picked up most of Conan Doyle’s Spirentinum books at William Targ’s bookstore in Chicago in the 1930s. In 1975 Gardner published "The Irrelevance of Conan Doyle" in Beyond Baker Street. A Sherlockian Anthology, a Festschrift in honor of BSI Commissioner Julian Wolff edited by Michael Harrison (Roberts-Merrill, 1976). This article combined an attack on Doyle’s extreme credibility with a whimsical bit of Higher Criticism.

In 1984, because of his abiding interest in G. K. Chesterton, Gardner wrote a review of a pamphlet by Robert Mayer, a rival of Shaw amongst Chesterton collectors. Published in Baker Street Miscellany, the story is about a meeting of Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown. Gardner’s review is written far more about Chesterton than Shaw ever did, including the Annotated Innocence of Father Brown and his new The Fantastic Fiction of G. K. Chesterton. Published by the Battered Silicon Dispatch Box, which includes the Mayer reviews.

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The Sign of Four

A t a meeting of the Younger Starmods of Iowa City, Iowa, a gift was made to the group. Mike Kramme, a member of the Younger Starmods, presented the society with a copy of a script of The Sign of Four. This “remarkable little drama” (ABBE) has now been donated to the Sherlock Holmes Collections.

Dr. Michael Kramme is president of The Museum of Repertory Americana. According to its website, “The Museum of Repertory Americana, located in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, is dedicated to the preservation of memorabilia and artifacts of early repertory theatre. The collection includes numerous painted costumes and scenic pieces, costumes and equipment used by individual performers and technicians, playbills, show cards, advertising sheets, etc., and an extensive research library of rare scripts, correspondence, tour schedules, production photos and other original source materials. Of special interest is the large collection of videotaped interviews with actual ‘troupers’ describing their professional and personal experiences.” (http://www.theatre-museum.com/home.html) The museum opened on September 1, 1973, reflecting the long-time interest of repertory theatre company owners and actors Neil and Caroline Schaffner.

The Schaffners collected theatrical memorabilia from the 1850s to 1950s, a time when traveling performing companies toured rural areas of the United States. The troupes performed “comedy, farce, Broadway hits, adapted classics and suspenseful mysteries in settings that ranged from small-town opera houses to empty lot tent theatres.” When the museum opened on the grounds of the Midwest Old Settlers and Threshers Association, volunteers catalogued the Schaffners’ collection. Since that time, numerous donations have been received of materials from the more than four hundred touring companies of that time, from their actors and their families. In addition to the materials listed, the museum holds newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, dissertations and items from minstrel shows, showboats and Chautauquas. The museum is also home to the Caroline Schaffner Research Library. In 1999 work began on a database for interested researchers to access. The Museum produces one of the old repertoire plays each summer.

Dr. Kramme located the duplicate copy of The Sign of Four that was originally part of the collection of Robert J. Sherman of Chicago, who ran a play bureau leasing scripts to these...