



Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S

"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)



Contents

Overview of The Collections

1

Undershaw

2

Edith Meiser

3

Calling all Scion Societies

3

About the Friends

4

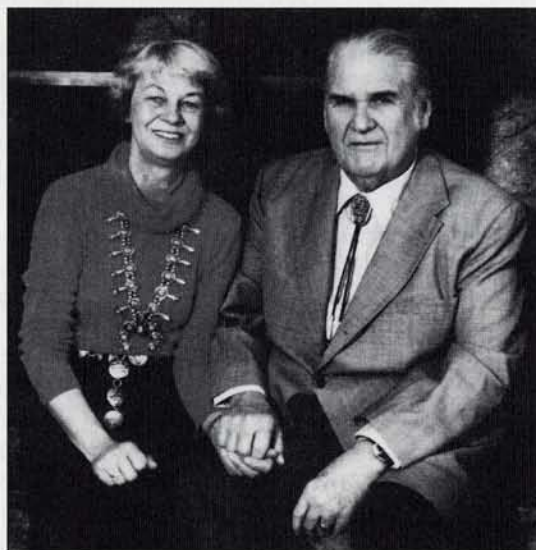
Contents of the Crowded Box-Room

The Sherlock Holmes Collections, housed in Wilson Library on the University of Minnesota Minneapolis Campus, are actually an assemblage of many collections. Though Sherlockians are likely to already be familiar with many of these, many people may not realize the extent and variety of the materials which makes up this amazing resource.

In this first issue of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections newsletter, it is appropriate to provide a brief overview.

The genesis of The Collections was the purchase in 1974 of the James C. Iraldi library of 160 books, 150 periodicals and much ephemera. It was especially strong in British and American first editions of the Canon.

In 1977, the collection of Nobel laureate, Philip S. Hench was acquired from Mary Kahler, Hench's widow. Hench, who was a long standing member of the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota, had acquired no fewer than four copies of *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887 which contains the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes. Other highlights of Hench's material include 4 pages of the original *Hounds of the Baskervilles* manuscript, several original illustrations by Frederic Dorr Steele, scrapbooks and a photo album owned by William Gillette. In all, the Hench



Dorothy Rowe Shaw and John Bennett Shaw

collection contains over 1750 books, 1400 periodicals plus ephemera.

Frederic Dorr Steele, mentioned above, was the premier illustrator of Holmes in America. His work appeared in *Collier's Weekly* which carried the Holmes stories in America. The collection of papers, manuscripts and photographs was donated to the University in 1986 by Steele's children.

Some 300 scripts and broadcast recordings of Edith Meiser's Holmes adaptations for radio came to the Library in 1987. An actress, writer, director and producer,

Box-Room continued on page 2

100

YEARS AGO

“...a considerable mansion” (ACD)

In June, 1897, Dr. Arthur Conan Doyle and his first wife Louise, moved into the large house they would call Undershaw.

Doyle purchased the property located south of London at Hindhead, in 1895 after hearing Grant Allen praise the restorative powers of the atmosphere there. Allen, like Doyle's wife, suffered from consumption. For her health, the Doyle's traveled extensively in Egypt while the house was under construction.

In Hindhead, the Doyle's lived not only near Allen, but also George Bernard Shaw, George Eliot and Tennyson who also had estates in the area.

Undershaw was so named, Doyle writes, because of “a hanging grove of trees” and “in good Anglo-Saxon” ‘shaw’ means ‘forest.’

This “considerable mansion” was gabled and constructed of red brick. The upper floors were faced with tile to match those of their former home in South Norwood. It contained a huge billiard room and a large drawing room which was filled with souvenirs from Doyle's world travels.

It was during his time at Undershaw that Doyle wrote “*A Duet*,” “*Uncle Bernac*,” “*The Tragedy of the Korosko*,” “*Sir Nigel*” and “*The Hound of the Baskervilles*.” A play about Sherlock Holmes written there became the basis for William Gillette's famous stage production.

Doyle, acting on his own advice to the British government, started one of the first Rifle Clubs while at Undershaw.

Today, the house is a hotel open to the public. ✓

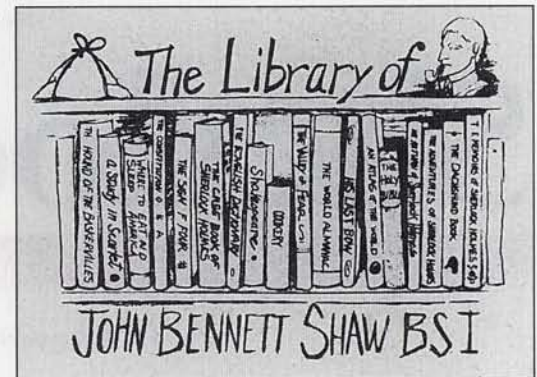
Box-Room continued from page 1

Meiser was the first to bring Holmes to radio. In addition to the radio material, this collection also includes her manuscripts for the Holmes comic strips and non-Holmes plays.

1988 saw the addition of two collections to the University of Minnesota Library. First J. Harold Kittleson, a prominent Minnesota bookman, donated his collection of Christopher Morley material. As the founder of the Baker Street Irregulars, this collection includes a wide representation of Morley's work plus correspondence of special interest to the Twin Cities.

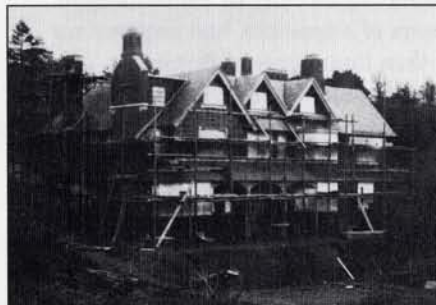
The second 1988 addition was the library and papers of author, collector and Sherlockian, Vincent Starrett. Starrett's library contains copies of his books and newspaper columns. His papers include manuscripts and a massive amount of correspondence with authors, publishers and Sherlockians world-wide.

By far the largest and most extensive Sherlockian library to arrive at the University is that which belonged to John Bennett Shaw of Santa Fe, New Mexico, whose BSI investiture, “*The Hans Sloan of His Age*” is one of the most fitting ever given out. Shaw's motto was, “Don't throw it away, send it to me.” His sense of humor and his love for anything Sherlockian aided him in gathering an incredible amount of material which ranged from the sublime — for example the copy of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* owned by Alexandra, Tsarina of Russia — to the



ridiculous, underwear with a Sherlock motif. In all, Shaw's library spanned over 12,000 books, 32,000 periodicals and dozens of crates of ephemera. His collection contains representations of the Holmes stories in over 60 languages.

Other, important but smaller collections also add to the diversity of the University's holdings. The manuscript papers of William S. Baring-Gould's *Annotated Sherlock Holmes* and much of his correspondence was donated by Baring-Gould's widow, Ceil. A portion of Dr. John Crotty's Holmes collection which contains the correspondence of Dr. Gray Chandler Briggs deals with Briggs' systematic identification of Camden House and 221B in Baker Street. The Howard Haycraft papers, contain not only correspondence with authors and critics of detective fiction, but Haycraft's research material for *The Boys' Sherlock Holmes* and *Murder for Pleasure*, his celebrated study of the mystery genre. In 1995 the library of E. W. McDiarmid, a founder of the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota came to the Library. ✓



Undershaw under construction



Undershaw, “...a considerable mansion”

Calling all Scion Societies...

One goal of the Sherlock Holmes Collections is to be the central repository for all scion society publications. As the depository of record we need a complete run of every periodical, whether original or copy. We would like to encourage each society to contact the University of Minnesota Library for an audit of their scion holdings. The involvement of every scion society in this project is essential. John Bennett Shaw's spirit of collecting lives on in Minnesota. We hope that each scion society will consider additional donations of material and/or money to The Collections. ♡



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
Bruce E. Southworth, B.S.I.
1621 Lafond Ave
St. Paul, MN 55104-2212
612-645-8131 (voice/Fax)
bruces1@mindspring.com

Editorial Board
Julie McKuras, Dr. Richard Sveum

Copyright © 1997
University of Minnesota Library
The University of Minnesota is an Equal
Opportunity Educator and Employer.

50

YEARS AGO

“Cadaver in the Roman Toga” by Edith Meiser airs on November 9, 1947

In 1930, actress and writer Edith Meiser began to adapt Sherlock Holmes's cases for radio. Her first program, “*The Speckled Band*” featured the great William Gillette as Holmes, a role he had been playing for nearly 3 decades.

Meiser's Holmes productions ran until 1936 featuring Richard Gordon then Louis Hector as Holmes. In the three years that followed, Meiser produced a series of adventures featuring Reginald Fortune.

By 1939, Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce revived Holmes and Watson on radio. Meiser's first scripts were rebroadcast, and in addition she created a series of new cases for Holmes.



Edith Meiser

This lasted until 1944 when she was replaced by Denis Green and Anthony Boucher. But in 1947 Meiser returned to writing new scripts, this time with John Stanley as Holmes and Alfred Shirley as Watson.

Meiser and Holmes on radio parted company in 1948, but her life would remain intertwined with the Great Detective's for many more years. She would continue to write Holmes adventures but for a new medium, the comic strip. Her stories, illustrated by

Frank Giacoia, appeared in newspapers from March, 1954 to November, 1956. They were reprinted in comic book form in the late 80's and early 90's.

In 1987 Edith Meiser was honored as “The Woman” by the Baker Street Irregulars. She was awarded the Queen Victoria Medal by the BSI in 1990, and at a historic meeting in January 1991, was one of the first six women to receive an investiture (“A Fascinating and Beautiful Woman”) in the BSI. Meiser passed away in September 1993.

Throughout her life Meiser continued to act on stage and in films. She established the Edith Meiser Foundation to support theatrical projects. ♡

```

MUTUAL          SHERLOCK HOLMES'
                NOVEMBER 9, 1947    SUNDAY
-----
[MUSIC:.....IN AND DOWN...B-G.]
HARRICE:        From New York the makers of Clipper Craft Clothes for
                men and 924 leading retail stores from coast to coast
                present, the world's most famous detective, SHERLOCK
                HOLMES.

SOUND:          (APPLAUSE)
[MUSIC:.....B-G...MODULATE INTO THEME...B-G.]
HARRICE:        Our stories are based upon the character of SHERLOCK
                HOLMES created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. SHERLOCK
                HOLMES is portrayed by John Stanley, DR. WATSON by
                Alfred Shirley, and the dramatizations are by Edith
                Meiser.

[MUSIC:.....UP AND DOWN]
HARRICE:        Once again we find ourselves in front of Doctor
                Watson's crackling fire.
WATSON:         Just a moment, Mr. Harrice...till I put on a fresh
                pine knot...so our listeners can really hear it.
SOUND:          (TRUD OF LOG) (CRACKLING OF FIRE)
WATSON:         That's the ticket. Go ahead, Mr. Harrice.
HARRICE:        Outside a cold white autumn mist shrouds the black
                tree skeletons. But inside we sit warm and cosy -
                and ready for another of Dr. Watson's fabulous
                Sherlock Holmes Adventures. What's it to be
                tonight, sir?
    
```

ms1

Page 1 of “Cadaver in the Roman Toga”

Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections: A word from Dr. Richard Sveum, President

The Friends was organized in July 1995 to support the University of Minnesota Libraries and the Special Collections and Rare Book Department. This initial newsletter is being sent to you because of your enthusiasm for Sherlock Holmes. Subsequent issues can only be sent to members of the Friends of the Sherlock Holmes Collections. To become a member all you need to do is send a contribution in the enclosed envelope. We hope that you will want to receive all future newsletters containing information about The Collections. The next newsletter will be longer with expanded coverage and new columns of interest to all collectors, researchers and

enthusiasts. Our foundation for building the World Center is based on the strength of the current holdings. To fulfill our vision of an International Reference Library of all Sherlockiana requires additional support. The need is most urgent for personnel, cataloging and collection management. The next priority being collection development and outreach. If you have any suggestions for future articles or comments about the Friends organization or Library Collection, please contact me at sveum001@maroon.tc.umn.edu. If you have suggestions for future articles or editorial comments about the newsletter, please contact Bruce Southworth at bruces1@mindspring.com. Please join us in this exciting challenge. ♡

Sherlock Holmes Collections
466 Wilson Library
309 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455

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

466 Wilson Library
309 19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Telephone: 612-624-7526
FAX: 612-626-9353
email: hubbs001@gold.tc.umn.edu
Hours: Mon-Fri 9-5

Carol Urness, Acting Curator
Carol Johnson, Acting Assistant Curator
Jamie F. Hubbs, Collection Specialist

Mailing list corrections requested—

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