



Sherlock Holmes

C O L L E C T I O N S



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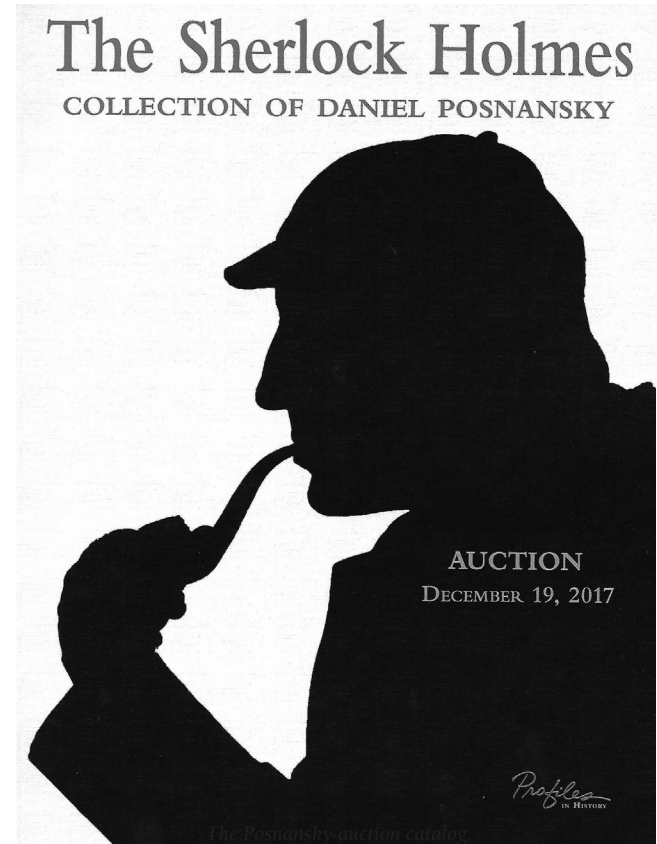
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"Your merits should be publicly recognized" (STUD)

The Posnansky Auction

Mention the name Daniel Posnansky to a Sherlockian and a host of friendships, memories, and events spring immediately to mind. Dan's long association with the Speckled Band of Boston and the Baker Street Irregulars place him at the center of established Holmesian concerns. His collecting pursuits and expertise are renowned, especially in the area of pirated editions. He combines these interests with a hospitable and sociable spirit that expresses itself in a willingness to share years of experience and expertise. Be it over a drink or meal, by telephone, mail, or in person, Dan has helped many a budding or seasoned collector.

He seems to have a special place in his being for libraries and librarians. Dan was a participant in early Collections advisory committee meetings in New York and Minneapolis. In 2004, his entertaining and informative talk, "Hounds Across the Sea," graced our conference "A River Runs by It." In 2005-2006, Dan consulted with Friends and staff of the Sherlock Holmes Collections, helping us set next directions for our many activities. On a personal note, Dan welcomed me as a guest to a meeting of the Speckled Band and to a number of



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100

YEARS AGO

Every book has in itself a story to tell.

In the Collections there is a copy of a Swedish 1918 edition of *A Study in Scarlet* (*En studie i rött*), published by Nordiska Förlaget. It is not rare. But there is a story.

It began in 1910 when wholesale trader K.V. Hultin started Nordiska Förlaget to publish good and inexpensive literature – what he called “a library in every Swedish home”. The cheapest books at the time cost 1 krona (25 cents), but Mr. Hultin sold his books for a fourth of that price, mainly through subscription. He printed on wood-free paper to ensure that the copies would last, and he aimed for perfect translations and beautiful covers by great Swedish artists.

Almost all of Hultin’s books were by foreign authors, either classics or contemporary. In 1904, Sweden had joined the Berne convention, so Swedish publishers now had to pay royalties to foreign authors – but only for ten years after the work was originally published. Swedish authors would have cost Hultin a lot more.

The first book from Nordiska was Kipling’s *The Jungle Book*, and the second *A Study in Scarlet*, in Swedish translation by Ellen Ryding, a teacher from the western part of Sweden who also translated Thomas Carlyle. Nordiska published one book a week, among them five other books with Holmes stories by Conan Doyle.

The books became so popular that most of them sold in 60,000–90,000 copies. A Swedish advertisement for Samuelson’s 1914 movie *A Study in Scarlet* noted that the book had sold 100,000 copies in Sweden – most of them were from Nordiska.

Åhlén & Åkerlund acquired Nordiska in 1913, at the same time as competitors made cheap books less attractive by starting to publish low quality literature, resulting in readers feeling ashamed of buying too inexpensive books. The prices also got higher, slowly killing the inexpensive book series. When *A Study in Scarlet* was published again by Nordiska Förlaget in 1918 the price was nearly four times as high as eight years earlier.

The 1918 edition had a beautiful cover illustration by Petter Lindroth, a shy and humble former cartoonist who had just started a successful career as a book cover artist.

Finally, there is one more story to tell – about the copy in the Shaw collection. It has Shaw’s bookplate in it, and the citation says it’s a presentation copy from Ted Bergman to Shaw.



The Swedish 1918 edition of *A Study in Scarlet* (*En studie i rött*)

Ted passed away in October 2017, at the age of 89. He was my dearest friend, and – as I have mentioned in a previous issue of this newsletter – my Sherlockian mentor.

There are 512 copies of *A Study in Scarlet* in the Collections, all of them different in some way. But thanks to the history of this very copy it is indeed the one that is closest to my heart.

And that was the story this book had to tell. ♡

Mattias Boström, BSI

50

YEARS AGO

Fifty years ago there appeared an article titled “An Old Sea Dog in Baker Street” in the March issue of *The Baker Street Journal*. Author Harold F. Watson compared similarities in *Treasure Island*, published in 1883, to *The Sign of Four*, published in 1890 (also published as *The Sign of the Four* in the United States). One cannot help but immediately notice the author’s surname, “Watson.” For a Sherlockian, it isn’t much of a stretch to speculate that Harold F. Watson might be one of the many offspring of Dr. John H. Watson, who mentioned in *The Sign of Four* that he had “an experience of women which extends over many nations and three separate continents.”! Harold F. Watson was born in 1895 in Milford, Pennsylvania. At that time John H. Watson would have been approximately forty-five years old and certainly capable of siring prodigy.

Harold F. Watson’s article attempts to show that Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four* was influenced by Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*. While Conan Doyle had most certainly read Stevenson’s work, it seems rather doubtful that it had any influence on Doyle’s novella. The two stories are of entirely different genres. *Treasure Island* is a boy’s adventure tale of the sea, told from the viewpoint of young Jim Hawkins, while *The Sign of Four* is an adult detective story dealing with the mysteries (at least to American readers) of the British in India as told by an Andaman Island Prison escapee.

To support his view, Harold F. Watson relies on a series of similarities. The first point is that each of the stories contains a treasure map; one a very detailed drawing of a distant island on which pirate treasure is buried, the other a primitive scribble showing part of a fortress in India, in the walls of which is hidden a stolen maharajah’s treasure.

Next, the author tries to show that the quirks and mannerisms of *The Sign of Four*’s Thaddeus Sholto’s are based on those of *Treasure Island*’s Ben Gunn. While Stevenson and Doyle vividly describe the personalities of two people long removed from the tempering effects of British society, they also draw two entirely different characters. The long-marooned Ben Gunn is a simple, uneducated former buccaneer. Sholto is educated, intelligent and independently wealthy. What they have in common are a series of physical tics and spasms and the ability to carry on both sides of a conversation.

Much is made of the coincidence of one-legged men: *The Sign of Four*’s Jonathan Small and *Treasure Island*’s Long John Silver. With British warships firing and receiving broadsides from just about every ship in the world that didn’t fly the Union Jack, it is certain that there was quite a large contingent of one-legged veterans from which to choose as a real-life model for an author’s central character. The fictional Long John Silver hardly need apply.

Other comparisons in Harold F. Watson’s article are equally lacking in logic. His final footnote takes issue with Robert Louis Stevenson for not grasping the difference between buccaneers and pirates. In common usage of the time the two words were synonymous. According to *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea*,

the word “buccaneer” is derived from the French *boucan*, a grill used to cook dried meat. Those who engaged in such cooking in the islands of the Caribbean were called *Bucaniers*. Among the many cooks involved in such efforts were the “brethren of the coast,” seamen of all nationalities, between ships, who sailed for their own account on the Spanish Main. Such men were termed “buccaneers.” Likewise, although pirates claimed to be privateers (those who carried a written warrant or *letter of marque* from a recognized government), most of them would attack any ship at any time. In other words, they too, sailed on their own account. Therefore buccaneers and pirates operated in the same manner, making these terms equally accurate.

Of course, Harold F. Watson’s article was conjecture. He compares a few similarities in the two stories and would have the reader believe that *The Sign of Four* is derived from *Treasure Island*. While there is no question of Mr. Watson’s scholarship and nautical knowledge, one has to wonder at his logic. But then, being a teacher, perhaps he wrote “An Old Sea Dog in Baker Street” to stimulate young minds into exploring new vistas. If so, he certainly succeeded. ♡

Walter Jaffee, BSI

For more information about Dr. Harold F. Watson, please see the article on page 7.

From the President

In this issue Curator Tim Johnson has written about acquisitions, appearances at University events, meetings and plans for upcoming symposiums, renovation and office moves for Special Collections. 2018 has already proved it will be a busy year for the Sherlock Holmes Collections.

Planning is underway for our 2019 triennial conference to be held

August 9-11, 2019. I will again act as co-chair with Julie McKuras as we coordinate with the Norwegian Explorers and the University Libraries. It promises to be an interesting, entertaining and informative weekend, and we're pleased that members of the Explorers have volunteered to work on the conference with us. We will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

A large percentage of the funds we raise from our triennial conferences goes to support the Collections; in December the Explorers presented Tim Johnson and Cheryl Fong with a check for \$2,221 to the Collections. It is with the support of groups and individuals, with their material and financial donations, that the Sherlock Holmes Collections continues to grow. ♡

Gary Thaden

Musings

My daughter Megan will undoubtedly remember her devotion to the old television series "The Golden Girls" which she watched repeatedly in reruns. The theme song for that program was frequently heard in our house and it's come back to me recently. "Thank You for Being a Friend" certainly applies to the contributors of this issue. I've been unable to go into the collections since December because of a walking boot I had to wear for a broken bone. Winter weather in Minnesota makes a boot like that both a snow shovel and sled. Friends from far and near have come to the rescue to research and write articles.

Mattias Boström, BSI was the logical candidate to write about our 100 Years Ago subject, the Swedish translation of *A Study in Scarlet*. In the June 2014 issue of this newsletter

ter Ted Bergman wrote an article he titled "About the Author"; Mattias's accompanying piece "My Mentor" highlighted how much Bergman's friendship and mentoring meant to him. Mattias volunteered to write not only about Swedish translation but also to point out the friendship between two great Sherlockians, Ted Bergman (1928-2017) and John Bennett Shaw. Mattias's book *From Holmes to Sherlock: The Story of the Men and Women Who Created an Icon* has been nominated for the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award in the Best Critical/Biographical category and for Malice Domestic's Agatha Award in the Best Nonfiction category.

Walter Jaffee, BSI is a first time contributor to the newsletter. In 2017 he edited *Mobile Holmes, Transportation in The Sherlockian Canon*, a book which answers the question Walter

posed in the introduction; "Just how did those Victorians get from one place to another?" With his own interest in the sea I was quite pleased that he quickly agreed to write the 50 Years Ago column about "An Old Sea Dog in Baker Street." *Mobile Holmes* can be ordered through *The Baker Street Journal* official website at <http://www.bakerstreetjournal.com/mobileholmes.html>.

Tim Johnson writes our lead article about the Posnansky auction and what has been added to the Collections. He writes about his presentations, both past and future, and what's been going on around the Andersen Library. Gary Thaden's column updates us on the upcoming conference to be held here August 9-11, 2019. ♡

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI

Added to the Collections

Catherine Cooke donated the program from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London dinner held January 6, 2018. "The Stormy Petrel Supper" was held in the Members' Dining Room in the House of Commons.

Barbara Blankenship added three more booklets to the Marshall Blankenship Collection. ♡

An Update from the Collections

The holidays have come and gone. We celebrated an evening with author Larry Millett to a full house. New York birthday festivities are now memories for many. A midwinter quiet settled on the campus. With the New Year comes new realities. We are off to a good start.

In my last report, we contemplated using ear plugs as nail gun, hammer and saw disturbed our normally tranquil surroundings. Happily, ground floor construction work on the new Maxine Houghton Wallin Special Collections Research Center is nearing completion. By the time you read these words we will be open for business in our beautiful new setting. Our modern reading room triples the number of research workstations, now traditionally furnished with elegant tables. The state-of-the-art classroom includes an overhead document camera, allowing us to take advantage of new technologies in displaying our treasures for instructional sessions. Exhibition space in Andersen Library will double with the opening of a second gallery. The first exhibition will feature items—including a *Beeton's Christmas Annual*—in show we are calling “The Best of Pen and Press.” By the time celebrations of the new suite commence, we will have concluded moving our rare book collection from Wilson Library. It has been a strenuous but worthwhile exercise. I am thankful for all my colleagues who helped out on these many duties; we could not have done it without them. Two of our last tasks will be to re-establish ourselves in a new ground floor office and reinstall the Allen Mackler 221B Sitting Room in its new space on the second floor.

In the meantime, Cheryll Fong, our student assistants, and I have used whatever free time we've had outside the move to keep green the memory of the Master. In early December it was my privilege to deliver a short paper, along with Julie McKuras and Steve Schier, at the annual holiday dinner of the Norwegian Explorers of Minnesota. Together, we offered some observations and points to consider on “An East Wind Blowing,” that memo-

orable phrase from “His Last Bow.” I concentrated my remarks on the world of espionage and in the end wondered if Holmes, given his experience and elevated expertise—and having survived the East wind's blast—might be found wandering the halls of MI5 or MI6, consulting with those in need. As with all Explorers gatherings, it was a pleasure to share our enthusiasms together.

While I prepared for the Posnansky auction, Cheryll continued her work in fielding reference questions, answering interlibrary loan requests, processing collections, and overseeing work by our students. We've completed a new finding aid for our three-dimensional realia and artifact collection, are nearly finished in describing our newly acquired Marshall Blankenship collection, and are diving into new archival descriptions of material from David Hammer, Allen Mackler, and our audio-visual materials. Additional material continues to be digitized and added to our online depository, the UMedia Archive.

Winter cold makes one yearn, at times, for warmer climes. In late February, I made final arrangements to attend the April installment of “221B Con,” the very exciting Sherlockian convention in Atlanta. I also volunteered to serve on a number of panels, and I await word on those selections. During this convention, I'm looking forward to chatting with Liza Potts from Michigan State University about her work on the Sherlockian.net website and possible future plans for my Holmes and Doyle bibliography. Liza and her team in the Writing, Information, and Digital Experience (WIDE) research unit are doing great work on the website. I encourage you to see what they've been up to.

Since I missed this year's trip to New York because of duties in Minnesota, I'm looking forward to gathering with hundreds of kindred spirits this spring. I'm also beginning to prepare some remarks for a very special August gathering in St. Louis. Back in November, I received an invitation from Joe Eckrich and “The Parallel Case of St. Louis.”

They were just beginning plans for the dedication of a Sherlockian collection in the Rare Book Department of the St. Louis Public Library and wondered if I would be interested in being the keynote speaker for the event. Indeed, I am! Now titled “Holmes in the Heartland” and scheduled for the weekend of August 10-12, the conference program promises “BBQ, blues, tea and history and plenty of Sherlockian discussion!” I am very excited and honored to share in this inaugural event! My sincerest thanks to Rob Nunn, Stacey Bregenzer, Joe Eckrich, Mary Schroeder, Randy Getz, Tassy Hayden, Paul Schroeder and Nellie Brown—the Holmes in the Heartland Planning Committee—for inviting me to be part of what will surely be a most memorable weekend.

In between Atlanta and St. Louis, Cheryll and I will attend the annual Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries in New Orleans. This is the most significant yearly gathering of curators, archivists, librarians, book sellers, and related practitioners in our profession. I usually come away from these sessions inspired by new ideas, commentary, and a growing network of colleagues working in cultural memory institutions. Following the RBMS conference I'll stay in “the Crescent City” for the American Library Association (ALA) annual conference. Here I'm hoping to connect with other members of the Sub-Librarians Scion of the Baker Street Irregulars in the American Library Association for their annual gathering.

As you can tell, a lot is shaping up for this spring and summer. But we could not do this without your continued support through monetary and material contributions. Thank you so much for answering our autumn appeal and your continued generosity! We look forward to many days and years together of continuing enjoyment and service in all things Sherlockian. ♥

Timothy J. Johnson
E.W. McDiarmid Curator of the
Sherlock Holmes Collections

The Posnansky Auction... *Continued from Page 1*

Harvard Club breakfasts during the annual New York birthday festivities. He introduced this non-Irregular into the sodality of Irregular happenings.

In recent years, Dan stepped back from active involvement in many Sherlockian events. Yet, it came as a surprise when late last year word spread that his collection was slated for auction by Profiles in History, a thirty-two year old auction house in southern California. After getting over the initial shock of the Posnansky collection's imminent position on the block, I huddled with Collections board members about entering as a bidder and ordered an auction catalog. Given our long association with Dan, there was little doubt in a desire to acquire a part of his collection and by doing so celebrate this notable legacy. The catalog, also available for review online, provided guidance. It offered, as Glen Miranker noted in the introduction, "a testament to Dan Posnansky's skilled sleuthing and dogged pursuit of Sherlockian rarities."

This inventory of books, manuscripts, and ephemera is itself a collector's item. Miranker's essay is a heartfelt testimony as "Dan's occasional confederate in the hunt for books, for information, for the back-stories and the 'atmospherics' that give a great collection its heartbeat." In the paragraphs that follow, Glen gives us "some sense of what it's like to go scouting with a Master." These vignettes provide some delightful peeks into Dan's mastery. For example:

Among Dan's haunts were used-furniture stores. He had discovered that many shops didn't much care about the books that had been left in the cabinets and bookcases they acquired. And he sometimes found treasures among those slighted volumes. One of

those stores was known for its once-a-year sale, just before Christmas, of books that had been piling up since the previous January. I remember meeting up with Dan very early, standing in line and shivering together until the doors finally opened.

Tom Francis, another dear friend of Dan's, followed with another witness to deep bonds forged over decades. "His friendship has meant more to me than even his charm, generosity, enthusiasm and knowledge of Sherlock Holmes, all of which are prodigious. His collection of all things Sherlockian is amazing. A visit to his home was like going to a holy shrine."

With such an opening, we turned the page and began a slow, poignant review of a collection built over a lifetime. What, we asked, would be most appropriate for the Minnesota collections? What might carry with it a hint of this beloved Sherlockian? Page after page, we continued in awe of the items amassed by Dan. In the end, we settled on about half a dozen lots that built on strengths within the Collections.

After identifying potential targets, we focused on auction logistics. This included reviewing the auction's terms and conditions, registering as an online and absentee bidder, and assessing our budgetary situation. I wanted to make sure we had the necessary funds and that I mapped out how high we might be willing to go on any particular bid. The Collections rarely acquires items through auction. I can count on one hand the number of times—including a foray on eBay—that we have participated in such public sales.

On one occasion, I bid on an item while on vacation in the north woods of Minnesota. The night before the

auction, using a rickety internet connection from my cabin by the lake, I submitted an absentee bid. For hours, I remained uncertain whether my bid was accepted. Finally, in the dark of the night, a confirmation came through. The next day—auction day—I took my laptop to an outside picnic table where a stronger wireless signal allowed me to watch the auction unfold in (nearly) real time. (I discovered earlier in the day that the wire screening on the cabin porch interfered with the wireless signal.) In anticipation, I watched lot after lot hammered to conclusion with astounding rapidity. My desired lot proved no different. In a matter of seconds, the auctioneer blew by our low five-figure bid and ultimately settled on a much higher, jaw-dropping bid.

Those north woods memories came back to me as I mentally strapped myself in for the Posnansky auction. The sale commenced at 10 o'clock Pacific time, noon in Minneapolis. I estimated the auction would last late into the afternoon. About a half hour before the first lot appeared, my contact at Profiles called to make sure we had a good telephonic connection. We did. I readied a spreadsheet to track each lot's final price. While saddened to see Dan's collection dispersed, I knew we were prepared. We did our homework. I felt that our preparation honored in some small way the years Dan dedicated to building his collection.

As I later shared with a colleague at the University of Virginia who was preparing a column for *Fine Books & Collections* magazine, this was a very significant auction, from someone near the heart of Sherlockian interests for decades. Dan is at the center of many friendships and acquaintances that have developed over the years

Continued on page 8

"Dr. Watson, Mr. Sherlock Holmes"

Dr. Harold F. Watson's background didn't include a medical education at the University of London, or service with the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as assistant surgeon, but he certainly shared an interest in Sherlock Holmes with another Dr. Watson.

Harold Francis Watson, the son of John C. Watson, was born in Milford, PA on April 2, 1895. He graduated from New York University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1918 and a Master of Arts in 1920. While a senior he served as managing editor of N.Y.U.'s *Medley* and considered a career in journalism but decided his true calling was to teach. A June 8, 1962 article in the *Des Moines Register* states Watson began his teaching career at New York University followed by posts as assistant professor of English at the University of Maine and Hedding College. The September 1967 *Baker Street Journal* "Whodunit" indicates he also taught at West Virginia University where he served as visiting professor. In 1924 he began his career at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa as professor and head of the English Department. During his career at Simpson he rose to the position as Chairman of the Division of Humanities and served on several faculty committees as well as acting as Dean.

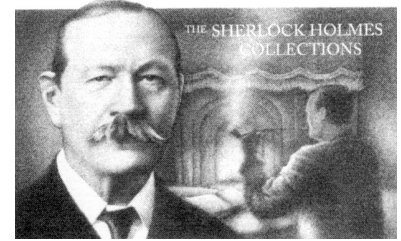
Watson's books *The Sailor in English Fiction and Drama* was published in 1931 and *The Coasts of Treasure Island* in 1969. The latter book "traces the development of sea stories in literature 'against the background of the windjammer and the old navy'" (*Des Moines Register*, July 27, 1969) *The Pike County Dispatch* (Milford, Pennsylvania) carried a feature article about him on July 31 that year regarding his new book. The paper described it as a "definitive analysis

of the sea yarn and the desert island romance." It went on to praise "the sophisticated and erudite author" for his "exhaustive research, accurate and factual footnoting and extensive bibliography." The reader may draw the conclusion that Watson's love of the sea must have influenced his two sons, "both former Navy men."

Watson retired from Simpson in 1960, was named Professor Emeritus and moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, where he belonged to The Arkansas Valley Investors. His honors included membership in Phi Beta Kappa (1956), inclusion on the Simpson College Honor Roll and an honorary doctorate from Simpson College on May 20, 1973. As the September 1973 *Baker Street Journal* noted, "Congratulations, Doctor Watson."

Watson died on August 13, 1975 in Fayetteville. His tombstone is engraved with his name, birth and death dates and the simple inscription "Teacher." ♣

Julie McKuras, ASH, BSI



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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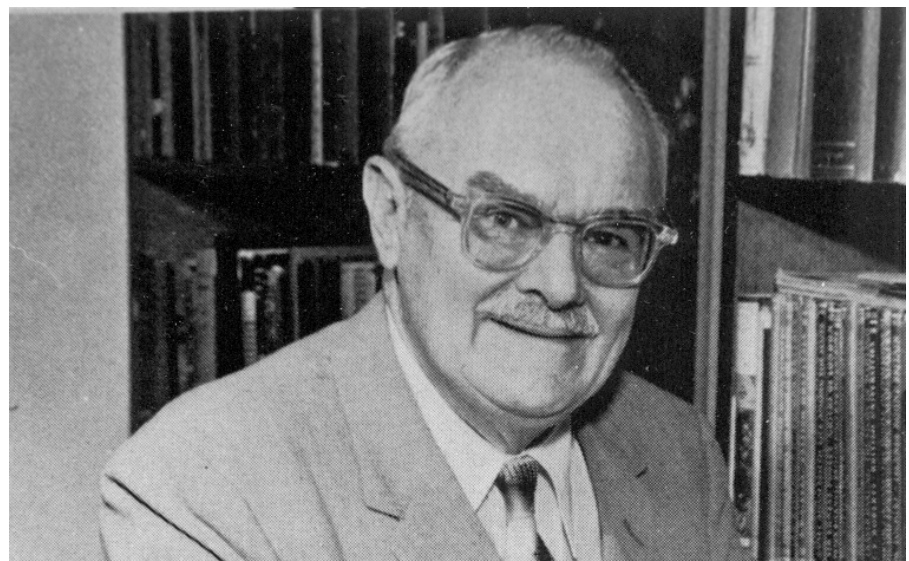
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Dr. Harold F. Watson

Photo courtesy of Simpson College Archives

The Posnansky Auction... *Continued from Page 6*

around a shared interest in Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Out of the vastness of his collection, spread over 293 lots, we targeted seven lots—primarily manuscript material and ephemera—for possible acquisition.

In the end, we were successful on five of those seven bids. Our winning bids primarily captured material related to the actor William Gillette (lots 176, 177, 178). Unfortunately, we were the underbidder on a lot I was particularly interested in (number 169), an original wood engraving plate of William Gillette as Sherlock Holmes. It had a pre-auction estimate of \$200-\$300. We stopped bidding at \$1,200 when it became clear that there was another very determined bidder in the room. In addition, we acquired a collection of seventeen Sherlock

Holmes stories in the form of tear sheets from *The Strand* magazine (lot 49) and a collection of vintage periodicals featuring Holmes (lot 54).

I surprised myself (and probably others) by winning the very first lot in the auction: a group of letters by or relating to the antiquary and illustrator James Doyle, an uncle to Sir Arthur. I was registered as both a telephone bidder (for the seven lots we identified of interest prior to the auction) and as an online bidder (attempting to catch some lots where bidding was low). When the first lot came on the block, I noticed a lack of bidding. As a lark, and to test that the online bidding function worked on my computer, I submitted a very low, and as it turned out, winning bid. I had the feeling that other bidders were still finding their seats, as

it were, and not yet attending to the auction. That first winning lot was a bit of a bonus for us. In this online mode, I was an underbidder on six other lots.

In the end, we were very pleased with how we did, and what we acquired at the auction. As Tom Francis noted at the beginning of the catalog, “Dan knew how and what to collect. He is unique.” To have a record of his auction in the form of the published catalog, and to have acquired items from his collection for the Sherlock Holmes Collections at the University of Minnesota, will provide further testimony to Dan’s friendship and legacy in the Sherlockian universe. 🐣

Timothy Johnson
E.W. McDiarmid Curator of the
Sherlock Holmes Collections

Remembrances

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

In Honor Of

The Norwegian Explorers Triennial Conferences
Charlene Nelson
Daniel Posnansky
Dick Sveum
Gary Thaden

From

The Norwegian Explorers
Abram Feuerstein
Randall Stock
Phil Bergem
Tom Gottwalt

In Memory Of

Paul Herbert
Kumeo Nakashima
Allen Mackler
Allen Mackler
Austin McLean
Gordon Speck
Janice Stauber
Janice Stauber

From

Julie and Mike McKuras
Showsaku Mashimo
Eric Swiggum
Phil Swiggum
Andrew Malec
Marsha Pollak
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