Introduction to "A bibliographer’s creed" and "The George Parker Winship lecture series at Houghton Library"

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Accessibility
Introduction

William P. Stoneman

My colleagues and I are pleased to welcome G. Thomas Tanselle to deliver the 100th Winship Lecture at Harvard University. This lecture series, named in honor of George Parker Winship (1871–1952), was established in 1968 by the John Barnard Associates. In his introduction to the series and the first Winship Lecture by A. N. L. Munby, William H. Bond explained that

Behind the formation and promotion of the Associates stood the figure of George Parker Winship, an extraordinary bookman who had twenty years of illustrious service at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence before coming to Harvard in 1915, where he was librarian of the Harry Elkins Widener Collection until he became Assistant Librarian of Harvard College Library in 1926. During this active career and after his retirement in 1936, Mr. Winship demonstrated a formidable bibliographical expertise mirrored in a long shelf of authoritative publications. But more important for the Harvard Library in the long run was his ability to locate and to fire with enthusiasm a whole generation of Harvard collectors.

The object of the Associates was “to honor the memory of John Barnard, who loved books and did what he could for Harvard.” In his remarks introducing Munby,

1 Delivered on April 1, 2014.


3 John Barnard and His Associates (Cambridge, Mass.: 1927), 23.

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Eric Hyde, Lord Sexton (1902–1980), elaborated on the formal objects of the Associates with these insights:

The Associates was simply a social body, formed of members having this interest, in books, in common. Its activities, under the happy guidance of the Founder, consisted of luncheons in Cambridge, usually with a noteworthy bookman present as a guest of honor. I remember that on several occasions Bruce Rogers—the most noted book designer of the present era—was with us; and Mr. Winship asked him to design the membership book of the Associates, which was beautifully printed on lime colored paper by the Harvard University Press. I have a copy with me, and it has to-day become a very desirable collector’s piece. On other occasions, usually in the evenings, Mr. Winship, with Mrs. Winship and their family, would entertain us at their beautiful old farm near Charles River Village, and I recall that on one such occasion the guest of honor was Dr. Eric Millar, Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, and a most delightful and helpful friend. With the stimulating leadership that Mr. Winship provided, it was obvious that the society revolved largely around his enthusiastic and ever genial personality, and once that was lost to us, it would thereafter become inactive.⁴

Sexton was, in fact, instrumental in 1966 in contacting nearly all the living members of the Associates and eighty of them subscribed to the fund which established the Winship Lecture.⁵ The distinguished speakers and their varied topics since 1968 make fascinating and inspiring reading. We have appended a list of all the Winship Lectures to date with the speaker, the title, and the date. We are confident that today’s 100th Lecture will be equally inspiring and an appropriate milestone for the series.

G. Thomas Tanselle has served as President of the Bibliographical Society of America, the Grolier Club, and the Society for Textual Scholarship. He is the former Vice President of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and Adjunct Professor of English at Columbia University. He is currently President of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, Co-Editor of the Northwestern-Newberry Edition of The Writings of Herman Melville, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Library of America, serving as its textual consultant. Mr. Tanselle has had a long and distinguished career as a bibliographer. He is the author of a number of seminal

⁴ Typescript of Sexton’s remarks now in the collection of Roger Stoddard.
G. Thomas Tanselle
Contributors

William P. Stoneman is the Editor of the *Harvard Library Bulletin*. In 1997 he was appointed Librarian of Houghton Library and from 2000 served as the Florence Fearrington Librarian of Houghton Library. He stepped down in 2013 to become Curator of Early Books and Manuscripts in Houghton Library.

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