



A Pair of Bibliomanes for Kansas:
Ralph Ellis
and
Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick

by ROBERT VOSPER

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OF several collectors whose books have come *en bloc* to the University of Kansas, two present classical cases of galloping bibliomania, Ralph N. Ellis, Jr., and Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick. A third, the legendary *bon vivant* Logan Clendening, was infected with the disease, but apparently the Doctor's remarkable skill as a diagnostician prevented his own case from running its full course. And a fourth, P. S. O'Hegarty of Dublin, had at one time been a professional bookseller, thereby of course acquiring permanent immunity by way of early inoculation with a pure strain of the virus.

The dramatically sudden, almost unexpected arrival of Ralph Ellis in Lawrence with his books early in March 1945 was but one of a series of tempestuous episodes in his short and bitter life. But the City of Lawrence was ill prepared to deal with a way of life that had repeatedly startled the sophisticated San Francisco Bay area for two decades. The University of Kansas and its Library had not yet begun the postwar drive toward excellence, and the heavy hands of prohibition and dust-bowl economy still weighed on the community spirit. Thus the quixotic events of the next ten months, as the Ellis case approached its tragic climax, have become almost a folk legend in Lawrence.

The size and importance of the Ralph Ellis Library in itself were startling enough. The myth says several freight cars full of books; the way bills, sufficiently impressive, indicate one fifty-foot car and one forty-foot car, both "loaded to capacity." The reporters, abetted I fear by Mr. Ellis, spoke of 65,000 volumes; for volumes you may

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fairly read "items," but the quantity is still significant. The same reporters, again no doubt recording what they heard, said: "probably the largest and most valuable collection of books on birds and mammals under private ownership in the world." Today, after time for advice and reflection, we are still sufficiently impressed to say: "probably the largest and most important library of its kind in private hands in this country at that time, and meriting favorable comparison with such other famous collections of ornithologia as those of Edward E. Ayer, William R. Coe, John C. Phillips, Frederic Gallatin, John E. Thayer, Major William Mullens, and William C. Braislin." Within that company, however, the Ellis collection now at Kansas stands out for the impassioned, almost violent haste of its creation. In fact that phrase, "impassioned, almost violent haste," marks the whole Ellis career.

Ralph N. Ellis, Jr., was born June 15, 1908, in Jericho, near Oyster Bay, Long Island, the only child of a wealthy fox-hunting yachtsman and socialite who was already fifty years old when his namesake was born. The boy's early life was spent in a seasonal cycle among the family estates in Camden (South Carolina), Jericho, and York Harbor (Maine). Afflicted from birth with obscure, debilitating physical and psychic ills, he was cosseted by his family and by nurses and governesses even more than might have been expected in his family circumstances. And since the presence of all three of the family seemed seldom to coincide at any one residence, Ralph, Jr., was all the more left in tutorial hands.

Fortunately his father's aristocratic sporting habits, together with the semi-rural setting of the family estates, seem to have fostered young Ralph's early interest in natural history. In 1920 at the age of twelve he had been granted a South Carolina license to collect birds' eggs and nests, and very quickly this common boyish hobby was pursued with precocious concentration and skill. Shortly thereafter Mrs. Ellis moved with her son to Berkeley, California, which thereupon became the primary home of this migratory family. In a letter to his father, who remained much of the time in Jericho, following the disastrous Berkeley fire of 1923 in which the Ellis home was among many destroyed, Ralph, Jr., revealed his frantic concern for the fate of his neatly tagged and numbered birds, nests, and eggs. "I then looked for

my green desk," he said, "and the Audobon (*sic*) and Ridgway. I had no hope of finding Audobon, but thought I might find Ridgway. The green desk contained eggs and I hoped to find them. . . . None of my birds were hurt, neither were my nests, but my eggs and books are gone. . . . I have an idea that they were saved but think the books were stolen. . . . I am going to spend the \$20 on skinning tools and buying other scales and things I cannot do without."

In that same fifteenth year he began a number of durable friendships with senior men at the University of California's famous Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. That relationship, and the particular advice of California's distinguished zoologist, Professor Joseph Grinnell, led Ralph's mother a few years later to employ a capable graduate student, Mr. Adrey E. Borell, who later went on to a successful career as a biologist with the federal government, as a regular scientific mentor and companion for her clever but erratic son. This seemed wiser than an attempt to round out his several incomplete semesters between 1928 and 1931 at the University of California with a standard education, and the arrangement with Mr. Borell turned out to be one of the most steadying factors in Ralph's life. The two went on field trips into the California and Nevada mountains, collaborated in scientific articles,¹ and hired a number of professional hunters to assist in building two scientific collections of permanent value: a collection of several thousand bird skins now at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology in Berkeley and another of about 2,800 small mammal skins now in the Museum of Natural History of the University of Kansas.

The climax to this side of Ralph Ellis' collecting came during 1931-32, after an abortive semester as a Harvard student. With a small group of other students he joined the Harvard Zoological Expedition to Australia under the leadership of Harvard's Professor W. W. Wheeler. This promising experience, like so many other episodes in Ellis' life, ended prematurely in a sudden violent flareup of temper and flurry of telegrams. Ellis' stated reason for this hasty change of plans reveals two compelling factors in his attitude throughout his life, his distressingly bad health and an overriding sense of persecution. In his opinion he "was obviously being followed night and

¹ See particularly their "Mammals of the Ruby Mountains Region of Northeastern Nevada," *Jour. Mammalogy* xv (Feb. 1934), 12-44.

day by Ira Dixon M.D. even for two weeks personal vacation." It appears that Dr. Dixon had been sent on the expedition by Ellis' mother, and for good reasons. A pathetic letter from Ellis himself to Professor Wheeler prior to the expedition explains: "I am always sick during one week in every three—this has been my condition for life."

Despite the assistance of a succession of medical doctors and psychiatrists this exhausting disability pursued him throughout the thirty-seven years of his life. The illness was diagnosed as "recurrent agranulocytosis," or "recurrent febrile attacks marked by a practical disappearance of the granulocytes (granular white blood cells)." The Ellis case was apparently "unique in medical literature."² This miserable condition not only left him easily subject to a variety of infections, but also accounted in large part for the markedly "unreasonable and unbalanced behavior of the boy during these attacks." It was assumed, though, that this latter aspect of his case had become consciously or subconsciously exaggerated because of the extent to which he had been humored at home.

The Australian venture was climactic in another way. Several years later in a letter to a fellow natural history collector Ralph Ellis said, "I have added no specimens to my collection since about 1931, but have been actively engaged in enlarging my library." Somewhere along the way the infection of the lost Audubon and Ridgway produced the other feverish disease that marked the young man's life.

Again his father may have had more influence than he knew, for a potted biography of Ralph Ellis, Sr., speaks of him as a "bibliophile," but of the father's books we know little more than this, although we may assume from his other interests that his was a purely gentlemanly approach. In the son, however, this inheritance burst into compelling vigor.

We know that Ralph, Jr., was buying books from Dawson's of Los Angeles as early as his fifteenth year, but his later correspondence regularly speaks of 1926, when he was eighteen, as the date of real beginning. In 1928 he wrote to Milton S. Ray of San Francisco, "I was delighted to note your interest in books on birds and mammals. I have been collecting these from time to time for the last two years and now

² For a clinical analysis of his case see Rutledge, Hansen-Prüss, and Thayer, "Recurrent Agranulocytosis," *Bull. Johns Hopkins Hospital* XLVI (June 1930), 369-89.

have the ordinary American works and several rarer items of more particular interest." Ray, it is worth noting, was later instrumental in presenting the John Henry Nash Library to the University of California at Berkeley.

In any event, from 1926 onwards Ralph Ellis assiduously maintained files of his incoming and outgoing correspondence—personal, business, and bookish—as well as detailed business records and notes of all sorts, so that in three well-stuffed four-drawer filing cabinets now at the University of Kansas we can follow his broadcast search for books and journals as well as the stormy details of his private and public life. There is in fact material for a far more precise and detailed study than this presentation permits.

In 1926 Ellis was "interested in enlarging [his] library of Natural Science books, especially those pertaining to Birds and Mammals." At the same time he began assiduously subscribing to scores of journals such as the one issued by the Mississippi Department of Conservation, joined dozens of societies such as the Linnean Society of New South Wales, and pieced together complete back files of periodicals such as *The Oölogist*. Eventually over 200 journals were coming to him regularly. Thus today his scientific journal collection of well over 5,000 bound volumes is a solid scholarly tool. This is supplemented by an extensive collection of American amateur bird society magazines.

By 1928 he had become interested in relevant scientific voyages early and late, eventually one of the more impressive and useful aspects of the total collection. Eight years later in writing to C. F. Heartman, Ellis indicated how deeply and widely his interests had led him: "I am accumulating an extensive (!) library on Vertebrate Zoology. In a broader sense, this may extend into any field, to wit: bibliography, exploration, Americana—especially all serials, etc." The Americana never really flourished; he did a superb job with the history of exploration, as has been mentioned; and he collected bibliography of all sorts as though he would seldom have access to a public research library.

By then (1936) his correspondence with British and American dealers must have been almost overwhelming, the variety is so great. Ralph Ellis never admitted one single dealer into his full confidence but dealt from the earliest days with great numbers in this country

and Great Britain. His European buying, however, was relatively slight. He was always deeply engaged with many other collectors in trading and selling duplicates. In 1935 he was writing frequently, for example, to that senior statesman, Dr. Casey A. Wood, about fine points in dating Catesby, about Ralph's cherished Guthrie's *Geography*, and about their mutual enthusiasm for the work of Captain Thomas Brown, which Dr. Wood declared to be "among the *rarissima*."

Sometime in the mid-1930's Ellis' collecting came into full bloom. This was helped in part by his first marriage in which for a brief time he found some encouragement in his overwhelming hobby and some sense of independence from his mother. More appreciably his collecting was furthered by changes in his financial status. On his death in 1930 the senior Ralph Ellis left an estate valued at over a million dollars, much of it tied up in land and in stocks at an awkward period in economic history, and much of Ralph, Jr.'s share therein tied up in trusts which began to come to him directly in 1933 when he reached the age of twenty-five. The Ellis financial story is as explosive and shifting as the whole of his life. As he so grossly but truthfully wrote to his friend Borell in 1940, "the financial background stinks."

On the one hand there are prolonged periods when he was cut off from almost all funds but determined to keep buying, so that we have record of vast numbers of threats and decisions by book dealers to put his account into the hands of collection agencies or of "our New York consulate," objections from his first wife for nonpayment of required alimony, refusals to issue credit cards in his name, and a note expelling him from a country club for nonpayment of dues. Most disturbing are his occasional desperate threats to sell all his books since he cannot afford to maintain them, and his worries about possible foreclosure of liens against them. The need for book money in larger and larger amounts became compulsive, and his well-developed sense of persecution soon led him into a crescendo of vindictive battles over money with his mother and other trustees.

On the other hand there are euphoric periods when bills for thousands of dollars and pounds sterling flow through his checkbooks with ease and frequency. In March 1936 he attended the auction of Dr. John Charles Phillips' bird books at the Anderson Galleries so successfully that his mother was forced to sell her custodian trust and a con-

siderable portion of the Jericho lands in order to bail him out from this and other involvements. From that springboard he leaped to England in April 1936 and stayed there until December 1937 on one great book-buying orgy, \$63,000 worth he later declared. Writing to a Berkeley friend in January 1937 he exclaimed, "I am here in London having the time of my life." And surely he was, for this was another period of climax leading inevitably and quickly to the story of his crushing commitment, on his mother's request, to a Livermore, California, sanitarium as a "mentally ill" but not insane person.

His buying in London was varied and increasingly shrewd and far-sighted. To Borell he wrote: "When I return I should have a good library and know something about the subject. London is the clearing house for books, and by doing things in a big way and attending auctions myself, I can really invest my money safely and have the pleasure of my books while I own them." He expected on return to the States to continue to buy books, "but they will probably have to be pretty rare ones." His purposeful accumulation of duplicates, with which his eventual library was fatly loaded, was clearly stated as a trading investment in the same letter: "I have immense numbers of duplicates to trade," he said, but, "experience and careful thinking have brought me to the conclusion never to sell for money . . . except directly through a dealer." At the same time he was pondering other extensions of his interest in natural history. "The vague possibility of writing some sort of bibliography is dawning," he wrote to another friend, "[or] perhaps I will go back to vertebrate zoology in some form or another." The advantages of possible affiliation with a museum or university, where his books might be housed and used in congenial circumstances, came frequently to his mind.

The biggest strike of his London stay centered in the basement stores of Henry Sotheran, Ltd., booksellers with whom Ellis did a heavy business. Following John Gould's death in 1881, Sotheran had bought "the Copyright and the whole remaining Stock of his works [consisting of] many hundred parcels, weighing upwards of thirty tons." This hoard lay in basement storage, almost forgotten for half a century, until a stock-taking beginning in 1934 led to the rediscovery of an immense quantity of Gouldiana:³ multiple copies of the books,

³ Henry Sotheran, Ltd. *Piccadilly Notes*, No. 9 [1934] and No. 22 [1937].

bound and unbound, plates in various states, manuscripts, original lithograph stones, and the like. Negotiations proceeded hot and heavy for the next several years, with Ellis desperately hoping actually to corner the market. In this he didn't fully succeed, but he did stockpile a tremendous quantity which he proposed to use over the years as a primary trading stock.⁴ Certainly, judging from the prices he paid, this was a potentially lucrative investment.

But once again there was a cruel drop from an exciting pinnacle. On his return to Berkeley he was faced with divorce and oppressive financial troubles, all of which exacerbated the frenetic side of his character. Increasing alcoholism and a sequence of blatantly antisocial acts such as had checkered his whole career, finally led to the commitment to Livermore early in 1940. The story is a morbid and complicated one that need not be detailed here, but Ralph Ellis' own sardonic note to Adrey Borell bears repeating in this context: "A recent newspaper clipping pertains to THE MESS. There is a brand new law in California, and unique to California like the Townsend Plan . . . , which says that a person can be mentally ill and not insane. Believe it or not, I am the first victim of it, so am *editio princeps* in first, agranulocytosis; second, perhaps the largest bird library in the world; and third, THIS. It is to be hoped that like the NRA this law is no good." The succeeding five years were cruelly filled with a series of trials and retrials, bitter re-cremations, and general lashings about at anyone and anything in sight. Gradually, however, the degree of legal repression was lessened so that he could be home for certain periods "to attend to his valuable book collection." Amidst all of this chaos he managed persistently to buy books, whether or not he could pay for them, to collate and annotate each one carefully in his scrawling hand, as always was his wont, to keep his notes and correspondence files in order, and to project a census of Gould materials in other hands.

In June 1943 when he became thirty-five he came into possession of more of his father's estate, including access to much of the principal. The result of course was another flurry of buying, including the complete private library of the recently deceased great naturalist C. Hart

⁴ Gordon C. Sauer, M.D., "Gouldiana," *Books and Libraries at the University of Kansas* No. 12 (May 1956), 2-3. Dr. Sauer reports that, "To my knowledge the University of Kansas Library has the most extensive collection in existence illustrating these several steps [in the production of Gould's illustrations]."

Merriam, a scholarly collection in vertebrate natural history, and but one of at least three collections that he acquired *en bloc*. At the same time he secured greater legal freedom, married hastily a second time, and began to lay plans to leave California. This he managed in the autumn of 1944 when he and his new wife fled to Nevada, the scene of his boyhood collecting. The next few months passed in a whirl. He vigorously investigated the possibility of depositing his library at several institutions, from New York to California, and wondered seriously about going into the book business with his duplicates, either from a shop in New York or by mail order. His wife returned to Berkeley, where he himself dared not reappear, early in 1945 and began the exhausting task of packing all the books amidst a frenzy of conflicting letters and telegrams from her husband. Finally late in February the two freight cars loaded with their 65,000 items headed for New York, and thereupon in typical Ellis style a last-minute telegram halted them en route at Lawrence, Kansas.

Professor E. Raymond Hall, Director of the Museum of Natural History at the University of Kansas, had been one of the senior museum staff who had befriended fifteen-year-old Ralph Ellis in Berkeley, and his offer of hospitality, supported by the University of Kansas, finally gave Ellis the institutional tie he had wanted. The books were safely housed, he was given office space and access to laboratories, a three-year loan contract was signed, change of address notes were carefully sent to dealers, and a new life was in sight. "I have been given huge quarters here," he wrote in July to an aunt,⁵ "and the reception we have had has been wonderful. . . ." To the same aunt he mentioned the latest trend in his collecting: "Lately I have expanded my library to give more importance to bibliography . . . privately printed items . . . and libraries." By this he referred to his new interest in the history of books and printing, an enthusiasm he unhappily had no time to pursue very far. Optimistically he added, "I hope you will feel that . . . the old 'Ralphie' as you knew him could be dead."

The hand of fate was heavy. Ralph Ellis *was* dead six months later. He died 17 Dec. 1945, presumably of pneumonia, alone in a hotel

⁵ It is of some interest that this aunt was Mrs. John Work Garrett of Baltimore; the Garrett rare book library at Evergreen House was left to Johns Hopkins University.

room while on a hunting trip near Colusa, California, aged only thirty-seven.

But the clangor and surprise of his life continued for some time after his death. The agreement with the University included a provision that in case of his death during the three-year interim "the ownership shall pass absolutely to the University of Kansas." Ownership did so pass but only after a series of prolonged and distressing court trials, ending with a State Supreme Court decision and final release of the books to the University in April 1950. The contestant was his widow, not his mother, for the latter wrote to a friend of the University that she hoped her son's library would indeed remain as his memorial at the University "which appreciated his work." Subsequently she herself left a generous bequest for the maintenance of the Ellis collection.

Thus finally Ralph Ellis' shattering life has come into peaceful concentration and focus. His books are now appreciated and effectively used at a university which supports a natural history museum noted for its research work both in the field and in the library, a university which has enhanced the Ellis collection by surrounding it with other relevant collections that together now support a teaching program in the history of science, a university that is prepared to produce the bibliographical work that Ralph Ellis himself often pondered. Manuscript is now complete for the first volume (A-F) of a projected three- or four-volume bibliographic catalogue of the ornithological books in the University of Kansas Library, based principally upon the Ralph N. Ellis collection.⁶

The decision to prepare such an ambitious catalogue was based not alone on a sense of obligation to the collector, but only after thoughtful analysis of existing ornithological catalogues, leading to the conclusion that this can indeed be a significant contribution to knowledge.⁷ Yet limited as it is to Ellis' core-interest in ornithology, the

⁶ This is being prepared by my bibliornithological colleague Dr. Robert M. Mengel, to whom I am indebted for much specific and general information. See his *A Catalog of an Exhibition of Landmarks in the Development of Ornithology from the Ralph N. Ellis Collection . . .* (Lawrence, University of Kansas Libraries, 1957).

⁷ Dr. Mengel has ascertained, for example, that compared with approximately 470 entries covering A-F in Zimmer's catalogue of the Ayer collection at the Chicago Natural History Museum, the forthcoming Ellis catalogue A-F contains 920, representing 800 distinct works of which 562 are wholly rather than just partially ornithological. Of these 920 entries, approximately 191 (20.8 per cent) are dated from the close of Zimmer's

catalogue will still be a long way from describing the fullness of the Ellis collection as it extends out beyond that center. To have produced a catalogue of the whole would have been, we think, a pure act of devotion, far less meaningful to others. It is possible though that a listing of the scientific voyage reports would be useful also, for he always acquired a full set, or sets in various states and editions, even when but a portion was concerned with birds.

The Justices of the Kansas Supreme Court were determined to maintain the integrity of Ralph Ellis' life work rather than allow it to be dissipated. To have done otherwise would have been to empty his life completely of meaning. "The library," they declared, "was his obsession and the thing nearest his heart." Only a touch of genius, I believe, and an obsessive touch of the madness of books could have produced so extensive and so well integrated a library within so brief and chaotic a lifetime.

* * *

Among some rough notes describing and analyzing his collection that Ralph Ellis prepared hastily during his brief Lawrence stay is one of peculiar interest to the purposes of this paper. "The best collection of the works of . . . Rafinesque," he wrote, "is at the University of Nebraska." In light of the kaleidoscopic Ellis career it is perhaps not too surprising that a very few years later those very Rafinesque books left Lincoln, Nebraska, and are now housed adjacent to the Ellis collection in Lawrence, Kansas. But that is another story and it requires a change of pace.

On a bitterly cold day in early February 1953 I went by train to Lincoln with the late Frank Glenn, antiquarian bookseller of Kansas City, to inspect a private library that Glenn had just purchased from the estate of Professor Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick. Glenn was never a man to spurn a superlative, but even his rodomontade had inadequately prepared me for my first view of the Fitzpatrick menage on the outskirts of Lincoln.

work forward. Of the remainder, 391 (42.5 per cent) do not appear in Zimmer, 100 (10.8 per cent) represent editions or impressions or issues distinct from those treated by him, and 2 (.2 per cent) are treated by Zimmer only in part, leaving 236 entries (25.7 per cent) in approximate (but not often exact) correspondence.

Externally the house held no surprise, except for its general air of utter neglect. It was a typical Midwestern farmhouse of white clapboard, two and a half storeys, with a long, cluttered porch. But once we had worked our way through the litter of the side yard and entered the kitchen door, it was evident that Frank Glenn's description had not been extravagant.

The house was literally full of books, packed with books, all thirteen rooms. Books were stacked under tables, piled up on beds, heaped in bundles on both sides of the stairways, pressed three and four deep in bookcases and onto ceiling-height shelving that lined every room and all hallways. Every room was awash with teetering piles of books, tied bundles of pamphlets, and stacks of magazines, so that we had to inch our way along trails hacked into a bookman's jungle. And this house was not the end of the trail: next door a one-storey cottage had been taken over as a "storage library," and later we found a barn on the old family homestead near Iowa City, loaded with piles and files of scientific journals. Most of the furniture in the main house in Lincoln was gone; even the larger bathroom fixtures had been relegated to a shed in the back yard to make way for more books. The only habitable, or perhaps I had better say "inhabited" room was the kitchen, where two army cots, surrounded by a clutter of books and papers, nestled against a potbelly stove.

On one of those cots Professor Fitzpatrick had died during the night of 28 Mar. 1952, just short of his eighty-fourth birthday. The other cot was for the badly crippled Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who survived her book-mad husband by a very few years. Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick was born 2 Apr. 1868, in Centerville, Iowa. Like many university men of his day he taught in the public schools while pursuing his own college education. In 1893 and 1895 he took a B.S. and then an M.S. degree at the State University in Iowa City, and in 1896 he married Miss Mary Frances Linder, who not only shared his long life but also collaborated with him to a remarkable degree. She too was a trained botanist, with graduate training at Bonn, and was joint author with her husband of several articles in his long scientific bibliography. Moreover, the Fitzpatrick bookplate specifically indicates "Library of T. J. Fitzpatrick; M. F. L. Fitzpatrick." The automatic assumption that the wife of a book collector does not sympathize with her husband's

hobby may well be more joke or myth than fact; in the Fitzpatrick case it clearly is not fact.⁸

In the years 1895 to 1899 and 1908 to 1912 in Lamoni, Iowa, Fitzpatrick taught mathematics at Graceland College, an establishment of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, a group that disagreed in principle with and deserted the main body of the Saints as they passed through the Midwest toward their promised land. This period at the turn of the century was especially significant in Fitzpatrick's life. An enthusiasm for that remarkable figure in early American science, C. S. Rafinesque, led to several articles and then flowered in 1911 when his still standard account, *Rafinesque, a Sketch of his Life, with Bibliography*, was published by the Historical Department of Iowa. Basic to that substantial volume was a collecting skill and devotion that formed one of the most impressive pearls in that house full of books in Lincoln, the Rafinesque section.

During that same period Fitzpatrick became so enamored of Midwestern history that he spent the years 1903-07 as the field collector for the Iowa State Historical Society and thus brought into professional focus the book collecting hobby that eventually consumed him. From those years we have the first record of his growing personal library, for in December 1904 the Board of Curators of the Historical Society accepted, apparently on loan, "the well-known Fitzpatrick collection and made provision for placing it in the rooms of the Society." At that point, half a century before his death, the collection comprised six thousand volumes and five thousand pamphlets, and the main collecting lines he was to pursue thereafter were already established. According to the Historical Society account there were, among other features: a collection of pre-Linnaean works and one hundred volumes of the writings of Linnaeus (when the scientific portions of the Fitzpatrick library came to the University of Kansas in 1953 there were 321 Linnaean items⁹); a Rafinesque collection in thirty volumes

⁸ There were two children. F. L. Fitzpatrick went on to a more conventional and more successful academic career than his father's, but Lillian L. Fitzpatrick's promising academic career was thwarted early by tuberculosis. In 1960 the University of Nebraska Press issued a revised edition of her *Nebraska Place-Names*. Her father was also interested in place names and published several articles on those of Iowa. His hoard of Nebraska and Iowa county histories was probably source material for these studies.

⁹ For an indication of the extent of the Linnaean holdings of the combined Fitzpatrick and Ellis collections, see Thomas R. Buckman's *A Catalog of an Exhibition . . . of Carolus Linnaeus . . .* (University of Kansas Libraries, Lawrence, 1957).

(this grew to be 156 books and pamphlets and 16 original manuscripts¹⁰); a significant group of Iowana (a comment in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* in 1904 called it "the largest private collection of Iowana in the State."); a collection of early American travels (I opened a small closet in Lincoln and found it stuffed with guide-books); a shorthand collection; many books and pamphlets relating to botany, geology, general science, and mathematics, including particularly midland local publications in those fields; and of special interest to the Society were the extensive files of journals, including a fairly complete set of all the various state experiment stations and the state and local academies of science publications.

One remarkable phase of his collecting that developed during the Graceland College days is not reported in this Historical Society account; this was his Mormon collection, and here again Fitzpatrick's remarkable foresight is evident. I say "again" because it must be clear already that his intense interest as a book collector in local history and in the history of science, especially American science, antedates by a generation the widespread popular and academic concern with those same fields of collecting. Moreover, Fitzpatrick was by far the first serious student to attempt to clear Rafinesque's name of the negative charge of eccentricity leveled by Asa Gray and others. In fact it has been within only the last very few years that practicing American scientists have come to recognize the importance of Rafinesque's work and the correctness of Fitzpatrick's defense.

It was at Graceland then that once more Fitzpatrick's prescience was remarkable. The college, it will be recalled, was supported by a dissident branch of the Mormon Church, and it is obvious from the detailed provenance notes that Fitzpatrick meticulously penciled into almost every item he ever acquired, that he was buying Mormon publications at auction in New York and from the local settlers for such prices as six cents and thirteen cents in the early years of this century. Up in the attic of the house in Lincoln I stumbled over a pile of brick and mortar dust that had drifted down where the main chimney

¹⁰ For a brief analysis, see Charles Boewe, "Rafinesque at Lawrence," *Books and Libraries at the University of Kansas* No. 21 (May 1959), 1-3. Professor Boewe proposes that the collection of printed Rafinesque material is matched only at Harvard and that the manuscripts, although few, are significant.

went through the floor; my bruised toe uncovered a string-tied bundle of the *Saints' Herald*, so we rapidly rooted through this morain and found three more such bundles.

Another persistent interest arose at Graceland. In addition to teaching, Fitzpatrick was to supervise the college library, and on his resignation in September 1912 a member of the Board of Governors especially commended him for his remarkable success at putting the library into useful order and expanding its collections. This led directly to an isolated but interesting episode in Fitzpatrick's career. He thereupon for the only time in his life abandoned the Midwest and academic pursuits to spend several months, apparently disappointing ones, as the technical reference librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library.

But then by some time in 1913 he was back in the Midwest, this time in Lincoln, Nebraska, where he spent the rest of his long life. The intention had apparently been that he should pursue a doctorate under his beloved mentor C. E. Bessey, but somehow in the face of his multifarious interests that key program was never completed. This failure of course accounts for the fact that Fitzpatrick never climbed the academic ladder and was in fact the ill-paid departmental drudge: assistant professor of botany, curator of the herbarium, and custodian of the botany and zoology library, until his retirement in 1949.

And this situation in turn explains the poverty that bedeviled him to the end. A note in his diary in 1915 reports, "Got some money today which was something of a relief," and a pathetic letter in the 1930's, when both his wife and his daughter were under continuous medical care, mentions the laughter of some student over a hole in his suit at a time when he could not afford a new one. All through the years Fitzpatrick amplified his meager salary, said never to have risen above \$1800, by the sale of duplicates. At times this seemed to be a thriving, at least an extensive business. He was selling scientific journal files to libraries all over this country and as far afield as Japan, on the basis of lists that he printed himself on a hand press in the attic. But even this extra effort apparently produced precious little budgetary slack. His book buying, extensive as it was, was never expensive. He bought from dealers all over the world, from catalogues and at auctions, as well as by the gunny sack full from local families, but he was a persistent search-

er and shrewd judge of a bargain, and his foresight in collecting unpopular subjects multiplied his bank account. Moreover, he was not finicky about the appearance of his books. They were in general a shabby lot, well encrusted with dust and coal smoke. Yet on the other hand he was a precise bibliographer. His handwritten annotations in each book record not only date, source, and price but also bibliographical observations that are invariably precise and based on detailed collation. Notes of such precision as "another copy I had was $\frac{1}{4}$ inch taller" or "slight tear in pp. 128-129" appear in acquisitions as late as September 1951. But at some point in his later years his bibliomania apparently became so cancerous that he could hardly forego anything with print on it.

On top of all this business Fitzpatrick continued to be a productive scientist until into the 1930's. For a 1928 *Who's Who in Lincoln* he reported having published "over 200 articles in various literary and technical journals," this in addition to several extensive monographs. I am told that most of his many articles are solid taxonomic and floristic studies, while one long monograph on "The Prairie"¹¹ is still considered a classic ecological study. Much of his writing relates of course to his field work for the herbarium.¹²

Shortly after his return to the Midwest in 1913 Fitzpatrick reported to the A. N. Marquis people that he owned "a scientific library of fifteen thousand volumes." This can be compared with the 1904 report of six thousand volumes and five thousand pamphlets. The next inventory figure appears in a story about the Fitzpatrick collection in the January 1927 issue of *The Nebraska Alumnus*, which speaks of "some 20,000 books" and then goes on to say that "the largest part of the collection is in Bessey hall, on the university campus, and may be consulted upon request."

When we visited Lincoln in February 1953 some of Professor Fitzpatrick's books were still in Bessey hall, locked in a tall, glass-front bookcase in the departmental library. It was a significant group—the

¹¹ J. E. Weaver and T. J. Fitzpatrick, *Ecological Monographs* IV, No. 2 (1934), 111-295.

¹² An obituary note in the Iowa Academy of Science *Proceedings* LIX (1952), 47-48, speaks of him as an "indiscriminate collector" of plants, but then pays tribute to these same collections as subsequent source material for some significant studies. It is interesting to ruminate on these comments with reference to his book collecting.

Linnaean collection, some early herbals, and a few other obviously "rare" books—but not numerically large. It is possible then that the 1927 total figure of "some 20,000 books" is suspect as being unduly modest.

Certainly by 1953 the collection had swollen far beyond that count. We never really knew how many volumes or items there were altogether; weight seemed a better and more dramatic measure of such a hoard. In November 1950, according to Fitzpatrick's lawyer and executor Mr. Lloyd Chapman, city officials had protested a presumed breach of the building code which specified forty pounds per square foot as the permissible load limit. The inspector estimated that the Fitzpatrick house was enduring 348 pounds per square foot and that there might be twenty-five tons of books in each of the larger rooms and ninety tons all told. Happily Attorney Chapman managed to repel this "invasion of [Fitzpatrick's] rights of privacy." The books that were finally selected out piece-by-piece for special sale filled four heavily loaded moving vans, and even then the house was crammed with books. That remainder was sold in a lot by Frank Glenn to a local secondhand book dealer, and a miscellaneous and grimy lot it was. I must confess, however, that I occasionally wonder in the night about that remainder. Our own selection for the University of Kansas Library was limited to those significant for scientific studies, including of course the history of science, but now that I am acutely aware of Fitzpatrick's frequent foreknowledge of books destined to rise from insignificance to high value, I am led to question my own judgment.

And what did we acquire from this bibliomane's repository? Something has been said already about the Linnaeus and Rafinesque sections, but there was more of course, about 10,000 volumes including many made up of pamphlets and periodicals, plus a great many manuscript pieces. Four of us from the University went up shortly after my first visit and spent several days at the dirty, heavy, and freezing (the executor didn't dare allow a fire in the house), but exciting task of hand picking. In one corner we found forty John Ray books in various editions.¹³ There were other groupings of books and pamphlets, and

¹³ R. Kidman and E. Farley, "Ray in Kansas," *Books and Libraries at the University of Kansas* No. 9 (May 1955), 9-10. The authors report that, "without too much duplication, [the Ellis and Fitzpatrick] books cover more than 50% of the items in Keynes, spread through his titles."

occasionally manuscripts, of such early American botanists as John Torrey (of the Torrey pine), William Barton, the Bartrams, John and William, Thomas Nuttall (the Harvard professor whom Dana in *Two Years Before the Mast* was surprised to find wandering barefoot on the beach at San Diego in 1837), Asa Gray (of the Gray Herbarium at Harvard), and William Darlington of Pennsylvania ("the Nestor of American botany").¹⁴ Since many of the early botanists were also medical men, these added usefully to our Clendening collection in medical history as well as fitting with remarkable neatness against Ralph Ellis' books. But Fitzpatrick's scientific books are not only American. His collection is international and covers all centuries, although because he could seldom afford them, books before the seventeenth century are not common. It is strongest in botany, with especially concentrated groupings on ferns, fungi, and algae.

An equally large selection, some 29,000 pounds in all, was acquired by the Kansas City, Missouri, Public Library: the Americana in general, including the Midwestern and local history, the American travels, and the Mormon collection, numbering about 1,500 separate items, that has special meaning in Kansas City because nearby Independence is the official home of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints.

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In contrast to the whirlwind collecting methods of Ralph Ellis, Thomas Jefferson Fitzpatrick's long career seems methodical and predictable, if not plodding. Yet the close of the Fitzpatrick story is as melodramatic as any episode in the Ellis story. Both collections came to the University of Kansas through a sudden, almost implausible circumstance. Ralph Ellis' books reached Lawrence, it will be recalled, when he sent a telegram to stop the freight cars en route to New York. The *deus ex machina* in the Fitzpatrick case was Mr. Malcolm G. Wyer, the emeritus librarian of the City and University of Denver. Mr. Wyer had been librarian of the State University of Iowa and then of the University of Nebraska during the first quarter of this century, and had known Fitzpatrick in both places. Subsequently their paths separated for many years. But then, as Mr. Wyer recalls, "Late in

¹⁴ Described by G. S. T. Cavanagh, "Florula Darlingtoniana," *Books and Libraries at the University of Kansas* No. 21 (May 1959), 3-7.

March 1952 I was one day looking over a second-hand book catalog and . . . my thoughts were led to Mr. Fitzpatrick from whom I had not heard for some years. I wrote him a letter asking about his library and his plans for it.”¹⁵ That letter never reached Professor Fitzpatrick for he had just died, so it went to his executor, who thereupon sought Mr. Wyer’s advice. Mr. Wyer among other things mentioned the name of Frank Glenn, and Frank Glenn phoned to Lawrence. Fortunately I answered the phone.

¹⁵ Malcolm G. Wyer, “Fitzpatrick as Collector,” *Books and Libraries at the University of Kansas* No. 4 (November 1953), 2-3.

Cover photograph: Inside Professor Fitzpatrick’s home (from the Fitzpatrick Archives in the Department of Special Collections, University of Kansas Libraries).