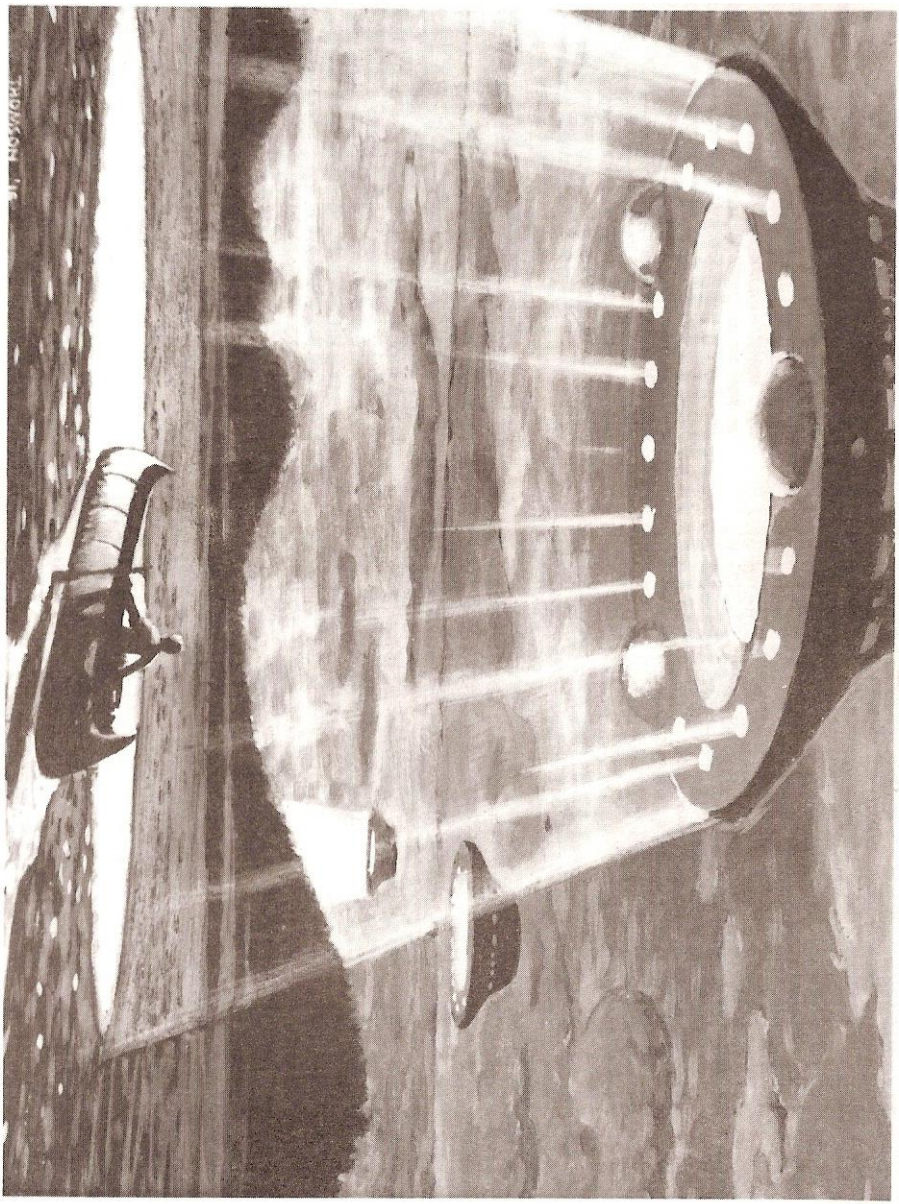
OPUNTIA 22



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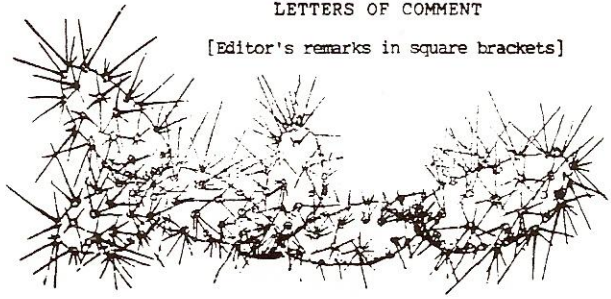
ART CREDIT: The cover art is by Paul Rivoche, Lightfall Art and Design, 99 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 419, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3J8. It appears courtesy of the National Library of Canada, which is using it as the theme image for the 1995 SF&F exhibition in Ottawa (also in partnership with the Merril SF Library in Toronto). This blockbuster exhibit will have a preview at the 1995 Canvention, which will be CanCon 95 in Ottawa from May 12 to 14. Membership in CanCon 95 is $15 via Box 5752, Nepean, Ontario K2C 3M1. For details about the exhibition, contact Andrea Paradis, Exhibitions and Liaison Officer, National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N4.

EDITORIAL: I recently obtained a copy of YEARS OF LIGHT: A CELEBRATION OF LESLIE A. CROUTCH, by John Robert Colombo. This 1982 trade paperback is still available from Dundurn Press, 2181 Queen Street East, Suite 301, Toronto Ontario M4E 1E5. Price is $16.04 (includes GST) to Canadian addresses; add a dollar or two more outside Canada for shipping. They take Visa and Mastercard. This book is as much a history of Canfandom in general as it is of Croutch, one of Canada's premier fans from the 1940s to 1960s. I'll have a review of the book in a later issue of OPUNTIA, but as the book has been out for a dozen years and is still in stock, there is no rush. Easy reading for those with an interest in fanhistories.

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[Editor's remarks in square brackets]



FROM: Don Fitch 1994-9-21
3908 Frijo
Covina, California 91722

I thought that ConAdian worked out very well, though I'm so jaded and blasé that it seemed more like slightly above average than spectacularly superb. In any event, it was far better than the dismal predictions by myself and others had led me to anticipate. The con workers gave little evidence of the stress sometimes encountered and almost everything worked smoothly and well.

Now we wait and see what happens to Winnipeg fandom in the wake of this event. Some local fandoms have virtually disappeared after producing a WorldCon. That may be a factor of past conditions when local fans tried to do all the work; now more than half of it seems to be farmed out to out-of-area conrunner types. Canada does seem to be in an unfortunate position re: WorldCons, mostly, as far as I can figure out, because of the effect of Customs hassles (real or fancied) on huxters and the Art Show. 25 years is too long between WorldCons, especially since the two Canadian WorldCons I've attended have been highly enjoyable. I'd guess that Toronto, Vancouver, and maybe other cities would have a good chance if they could work up a dependable-seeming Committee and sustain it

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through the necessary 5+ years. The two major problems seem to be finding cities with adequate facilities for such a large convention, and with having a fan group that is reasonably large and permanent enough (something apparently not characteristic of Canadian fandom so far).

I'm somewhat surprised that ConAdian got so much local media coverage from the economic angle. WorldCons may be the biggest and perhaps the only major conventions in the world attended almost entirely by people spending their own money rather than corporate funds, and in general fans aren't big spenders. Hotels don't especially like fan SF conventions, I understand, because we rarely eat in their expensive restaurant, or spend much time in the bar.

[WorldCons are small conventions compared with other hobbies, where people also spend their own money. The last international stamp show in USA had 200,000 paid members at Chicago; Canada's last philatelic international had 20,000 paid up in Toronto. If ConAdian had been a local SF con, it wouldn't have had the economic impact, since most attendees would eat at home, not book hotel rooms or buy souvenirs. But almost all ConAdian goers were outlanders who filled the hotels and ate in restaurants, so this was very noticeable to local businesses. ConAdian was also a big fish in a small pond, the largest con in the province, whereas (so someone told me) ConFrancisco wasn't even the largest convention that weekend.]

Thanks especially for producing OPUNTIA #20.2, the checklist and index of OPUNTIAs #1 to #20. As far as I know, Joe Siclari (who is indexing HYPHEN, SLANT, and a few other early and prominent fanzines) and I are the only people working on such indexes. We're both eager to encourage others, especially genzine publishers (other forms of fanzines don't usually lend themselves well to indexing) to do just what you did here. We'd like to establish a tradition of all faneds at least publishing periodically updated checklists of all their publications, including apazines. A few have done such lists, but I haven't seen any in the last five years or so, even though the prevalence of computers which make such a project easy should encourage them. I'm tempted to request permission to reprint your index [Permission granted - D.S.]. It goes logically with the one I did for MIMOSA and those semi-planned for STET, TRAP DOOR, and a few others I'm thinking about working on. If no one else does it, I may feel compelled to become the central source for fanzine checklists and indexes, at least until the Timebinders (the FanHistoricon people) get well organized enough to do it.

FROM: Holger Eliasson 1994-9-23
Box 171
S-114 79 Stockholm, Sweden

On the subject of Carl Brandon, here in Swedish fandom at least, Carl Brandon really is alive and well. Ever since the mid-1960s, some local big names like John Henri Holmberg and Bertil Martensson have been fond of making 'Brandonizations' both in the form of quotes and longer fanzine features, sometimes even including convention reports. On the other hand, we never quite progressed to the Karen Eliot stage, since in our social environment it has long been a custom that whenever a person writes something that is really insulting, politically incorrect, or just plain old vindictive, he or she always signs his real name to it, and/or pours some beer on Bruno K. Hoijer afterwards. Had we only our local Karen Eliot, social mores would perhaps improve a little. I note Ralph Alfonso as Central Mailer for Canadapa saying: "Well, I told you it would happen, and it has, half you goofs are finally out of the apa for sheer stupidity, boredom, and lack of enthusiasm on your part" sounds exactly like the average Swedish or Scandinavian apa CM.

FROM: Andrew Murdoch 1994-9-26
2563 Heron Street
Victoria, British Columbia V8R 5Z9

I see you took in most of the same things I did at ConAdian, particularly the parties. I don't think there was one party on your list that I didn't hit at sometime or another. Personally, I got a big chuckle at the Australia in '99 party. It was there that I was visited and inspected by the Klingon Bitches with Attitude. They bestowed upon me a butt-inspection seal of approval. The hilarious part came the next day at the Aurora Awards, when I realized the M.C. was also the K.B.A.'s leader.

Regarding the Aurora nominee ribbons, I don't know how many times I was asked by people what an Aurora was, but they all seemed to understand when I told them it was like a Canadian Hugo. Next WorldCon I go to, I thought I'd spread the Aurora Award's name around by asking people what a Hugo is, and then saying something like "Oh, it's like an Aurora, is it?".

Mind you, I think the highlight of the whole thing was hanging out in the fanzine room. Finally I got to meet most of the people who until now had only been heard from through lettercols and fanzines. No wonder I spent so much time there. Basically, whenever I didn't have anything else to do, I was in the fanzine lounge hanging out with everyone.

FROM: Joseph Major 1994-9-26
4701 Taylor Boulevard #8
Louisville, Kentucky 40215-2343

Robert Bloch, Guest of Honour of the first Canadian WorldCon (TorCon 1948) and the second Canadian WorldCon (TorCon II 1973) died September 23 and will be sorely missed.

[At ConAdian during the Hugo Awards, Forrest Ackerman announced Bloch's imminent death, and asked the audience to rise and give him a standing ovation in recognition of past contributions to SF.]

Society For The Preservation of SF: Yes, there can be problems with a change of curators meaning a change of interests, and your SF archival material goes to swell a landfill. The University of Louisville Rare Books librarian, George McWhorter, is a Burroughs fan. He has been responsible for several Burroughs Bibliophiles Dum-Dums in Louisville. They used to be at WorldCon but found out they were a special interest of no interest to general fandom. The U of L has a huge Burroughs collection. Your guess is as good as mine what will happen when McWhorter retires or dies.

The Jack Bowie-Read story (setting up clubs which foundered when everyone just wanted to read instead of organize) sounds all too familiar. I was reminded in that regard of the inane review of A WEALTH OF FABLE where the reviewer groused that there was nothing about fans sitting quietly at home reading. When these fans wonder why there is such a paucity of local interest, why the nearest con is two day's drive away, why romance novels have crowded out 90% of the local bookstore's space, telling them that they did not organize will not go anywhere.

FROM: Henry Welch 1994-10-13
1525 - 16 Avenue
Grafton, Wisconsin 53024-2017

In regard to your report of ConAdian, I fully agree with your assessment of the ancillary awards. The ones chosen seem to be a very arbitrary subset of the many similar awards. It could easily turn into another Oscar night if we let them all in.

FROM: Tom Feller 1994-9-27
Box 13626
Jackson, Mississippi 39236

Yours is the first report on ConAdian that I've seen. I wrote up a rough draft a few days after the event and plan to publish it in THE REASONABLE FREETHINKER later this year. This was my seventh WorldCon, and in my experience the Hugo Awards ceremony is usually on Saturday night and the Masquerade on Sunday. I didn't mind the minor awards much but I think they could have done away with that "No Award" routine, especially since they added the Aurora Awards to the program. I'm glad you remembered something of the conversation at the FOSFAX dinner. When I wrote up my report I drew a complete blank. One problem with WorldCons is information overload. I stayed at Hotel Fort Garry, which was farther away from the convention centre than three blocks, but I didn't mind the walk. There were none of the safety problems that we experienced at ConFrancisco. I probably encountered more panhandlers than most attendees because there is a casino in Hotel Fort Garry.

FROM: Robert Lichtman 1994-10-21
Box 30
Glen Ellen, California 95442

Small footnote to Michael McKenny's letter about Lilapa and the Clarkes. Yes, Lilapa is still being published and just had its 465th mailing. Mailings are monthly these days, but when Lilapa was founded and for many years the mailings came out twice a month. Norm Clarke and Gina Ellis are still members, though Norm appears infrequently and Gina only semi-frequently. Lilapa is basically a means for a group of old friends to stay in touch, and we're (yes, I'm a member too) not too harsh on ourselves. There are no activity requirements other than paying dues when necessary.

FROM: Vicki Rosenzweig 1994-10-23
33 Indian Road, 6-R
New York, New York 10034

[Regarding the Canadian apa history in OPUNTIA #19] the apa Mixed Company is not currently publishing. Janet Wilson is hanging on to the title and last membership list and may revive it, but the apa had fallen into a spiral of decline in which each mailing had fewer pages, thus less to respond to, so the members were less likely to contribute to the following mailing. I'm not sure of the causes despite having been there; some combination of people having other things to do (including other apas taking up their energy), lack of energetic recruiting (on all our parts), and a bit of personal conflict (of the sort that an apa that is otherwise thriving could handle without much trouble). In its last days, while Mixed Company was OE'd by a Canadian, there were at least as many copies going to the USA as to Canada. We didn't spend much time thinking of it as a Canadian apa (except we had to include the appropriate incantation "printed paper - no commercial value" on our zines to satisfy Customs, lest they decide they were dutiable knitted goods and hold them at the border), any more than I think of AWA, which I OE, as an American apa. Not that Canadian apa isn't a valid concept, but that it didn't seem to apply to Mixed Company, whose focus was on feminism rather than on Canadian culture or history.

FROM: Buck Coulson 1994-9-26
2677W-500N
Hartford City, Indiana 47348

Since I always planned my vacations around cons, I got around questions about Klingons by buying a photocube, filling it with masquerade photos of sexy females, and putting it on my desk. Never had another question, except "Going to another one of those things, eh?", usual-

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ly accompanied by a leer. I would leer back and say that I was. Did wonders for my local reputation.

If fans want their collections preserved, they should raise kids, turn the kids into fans, and leave the collections to them. Nothing to it. It's our method, and if Bruce doesn't have room for everything, which is likely, he knows where the remainder can be donated. Or sold, knowing Bruce. Fans who let their kids become mundanes betray the Cause. It's like Irish independence, you see. Societies For The Preservation Of will mostly preserve their own minutes.

Carl Brandon [the hoax] was a real fan for a time. A Swedish fan had his name legally changed to Carl Brandon and was active for several years after the original Brandon disappeared from fanzines. Haven't heard anything about him for several years though.

FROM: Harry Warner Jr. 1994-9-24
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

It was quite interesting to read about the visit to Chester Cuthbert, whom I consider to be an international treasure because he is living proof that I'm not the oldest active fan after all. His book population explosion seems to mirror mine, although I haven't used the stairway for storage purposes yet. But I've been acquiring books at an alarming rate in recent weeks, owing to unprecedented luck at yard sales and thrift stores.

Maybe I'm the only person who found one passing reference in Murray Moore's loc to have real significance. It was his mention of the 'Central Mailer' as the name for the Canadapa member who did most of the work. I've been urging unsuccessfully a change in name from Official Editor or Manager for the person who puts out mailings, but I hadn't been able to think of a satisfactory substitute. Central Mailer seems just right. My concern is with the possibility that this individual may someday get into deep trouble with the law because his title seems to imply that he has a supervisory function and should bear coresponsibility for permitting something that creates litigation to go out in the mailing. Most apas I'm familiar with give no decision-making to the Editor or Manager on what should and shouldn't be distributed, but it might be hard to convince a judge or jury of this fact. Central Mailer is a more accurate title for the real function of this person.

[What I don't like about the title of Editor is that in an apa, no one edits anyone else's work.]

FROM: Michael McKenny 1994-10-31
424 Cambridge Street South
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 4H5

Regarding fannish history, soon I'll make greater effort to trace a number of people who were active here at the time of the formation of the Ottawa SF Society and get their comments on what they were doing before that. Some of the people in that circle are Richard Labonté, Sue Wood, Michael Glickson, Keith Wilson, Alicia Austin, John Mansfield, Frank Tait, Linda Ross, and Rosemary Wlyot. I know at least two are dead. I encourage people involved in Ottawa fandom in the mid-1970s or earlier to get in touch with me.

FROM: Lloyd Penney 1994-11-2
412 - 4 Lisa Street
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6

ConAdian was a good WorldCon. Already I have heard reports that it was one of the better produced, organized, and operated WorldCons of the past decade. I see another Fan Achievement Aurora in John Mansfield's future.

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Worldcons are always fun for me because I prefer a level of involvement in a convention rather than just attend, and I always place names to faces for the first time, like yourself. We had a great time running the fanzine lounge, we did a lot of business, and we met so many familiar names, like Alan Stewart from Australia, the DUFF winner, and Steve Forty, just to name a couple. All involved were so pleased with the room, including ourselves, that we volunteered to run the fanzine rooms for the 1996 and 1997 WorldCons in Los Angeles and San Antonio respectively.

Laundrycon! All right! Just shows we can party anywhere, even in the local laundromat. The other folks there were Don and Lisa Shears of Trenton, Ontario. They're experienced fans in Toronto and Ottawa fandoms, and Don used to be stationed in Winnipeg, so he knows John Mansfield well. We were also part of a gathering in the lobby of Place Louis Riel, and it too was better than the Dead Dog.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Benoit Girard, Harry Andruschak, John Thiel, Mark Strickert, Peggy Rae Pavlat, Geri Sullivan

WHAT CONADIAN DID FOR ME
by Chester Cuthbert

I had never met Scott Ellis, who phoned to tell me that Andris Taskans, editor of PRAIRIE FIRE, was publishing a double issue for ConAdian, and with deadline imminent had suggested he ask me for information on van Vogt for a feature article. I supplied Scott with everything I could locate, but could not find my copy of REFLECTIONS OF A.E. VAN VOGT. G.N. Louise Jonasson, art director of PRAIRIE FIRE, surprised that I had heard nothing more from Scott, asked if she could photograph covers of books and magazines in my collection and if I knew where van Vogt's autobiography could be obtained. I agreed to the photos, and referred her to David H. Blair, my only Winnipeg fellow member of First Fandom, who has a copy. He and I were thanked by Taskans in the complimentary copies of the trade issue of PRAIRIE FIRE sent us. David may have an article assessing van Vogt's fiction in a future issue.

Referred to me by Chris Rutkowski, author of UNNATURAL HISTORY: TRUE MANITOBA MYSTERIES, CBC Radio asked me for an interview, saying they were looking for a fan, not an expert. They taperecorded in my home for over an hour. This was broadcast twice in twelve-minute condensed and edited form.

On the morning of September 1, before ConAdian began, Dale Speirs arrived by taxi, was given a tour of our home, lunch with my wife Muriel and son Ray (I don't eat lunch), and shown my archives relating to the Canadian SF Association and the Winnipeg SF Society. Dale is the big, quiet, and competent publisher of OPUNTIA, issue #21 of which contained his ConAdian report, my sketch of my fringe connection with SF, and his account of his visit, reaching me long before I started writing this.

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David Aronovitz, Fine Books Co. proprietor, was directed to me by a local bookshop owner, and purchased four books. I was ignorant of their value; David appraised them and paid me $275. I thanked him for this generous offer.

Lorna Toolis, Head Librarian of the Merril Collection of SF, Speculation, and Fantasy in Toronto (and a former member of our Winnipeg SF Society) brought Peter Halasz to meet me. They stayed for four hours during which Peter took notes of SF and fantasy books by Canadian authors read by me over many years. They had to leave before he finished the task, but I told him that Lorna had persuaded me to donate photocopies of my notes to the Library where he might consult them.

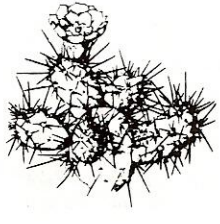
On September 4, Tom Whitmore phoned offering to pay taxi fare if I would attend the Fanzine Room at ConAdian. I explained that I do not attend conventions and declined this kindness. He phoned the following day and said that he, Marci Malinowycz, Alan Stewart, and Dick Lynch would call at my home. I could not remember having received any fanzine from Tom and pestered him with comments designed to have him enlighten me. Not until he handed me a copy of his August 1994 catalogue of The Other Change of Hobbit, Berkeley, California, did I realize that he was a dealer. All four toured my home, which is crowded with bookcases and cartons containing magazines, paperbacks, and books. I did not know that Dick and Nicki Lynch had won the Hugo for MIMOSA, but I thanked Dick for the wonderful issues sent me. Alan Stewart, winner of the DUFF Award, commented that he was happy to purchase cheaply Book Club editions which were not available in Australia. I understand that he and Dick are engineers, but I overlooked the opportunity to ask if they considered the weight of my books upstairs was a threat to the collapse of the floor.

On the morning of September 6, the phone rang. A friendly voice said, "I'm a fan from California who remembers reading your story 'The Sublime Vigil' in WONDER STORIES in 1934." I said "Hello Forry!"; he could not be anyone else. A taxi brought him, Jay Kay Klein, and James C. Whelan to my home for a couple of hours, during which Jay Kay took many photographs of us in several parts of the house and outside at the front.

Danny McGrath, who brought books from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to be autographed at ConAdian, and who carried an autograph book inscribed by celebrities, was referred to me by another bookshop proprietor and purchased from me $187 worth of rare books. He will attend the Glasgow WorldCon next year, and expects to buy much from me in the interval.

I told Stephen R. George, Winnipeg's most prolific horror novelist, how much I had enjoyed meeting so many fine people. He brought me a copy of the cover of his first pseudonymous Zebra novel MIRROR, MIRROR by "Valerie Stephans", due out soon. Steve has signed a contract to write a trilogy under the pseudonym "Jack Ellis".

Hoping to attain the age of 82 this month [October], an account like this is essential to remind me of what I owe ConAdian for bringing these people to Winnipeg. I hope that at least some of them will keep in touch with me.



A POTHOLE ON THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY
by Dale Speirs

At hand is a membership brochure from the Lead Pencil Club (Box 380, Wainscott, New York 11975), whose slogan I have used as the title of this article. There are no dues at present; the Club was founded as a subsidiary of Pushcart Press, a respected imprint in the small-press world. The founder in spirit is John Thoreau, a pencil manufacturer, and his son Henry David Thoreau, of WALDEN fame, with an assist from Doris Grumbach, who published EXTRA INNINGS in 1993. The founder in flesh is Bill Henderson, who has selected for the Club the motto "Not So Fast", the slogan "A Pothole On The Information Superhighway", and a theme "Simplify, Simplify". I think he has the motto and slogan incorrectly reversed. A motto is a phrase, the term coming from the same source for 'mutter'. A slogan is a war cry. I can easily see the highlanders scrambling up a hill screaming "Not so fast! Not so fast!". The phrase "A pothole on the information superhighway! A pothole on the information superhighway!" doesn't quite come off as a war chant, however. It does make something to mutter under one's breath as the boss leaves the room after giving you a tongue-lashing for messing up the Megacorp contract. I quite agree with the theme of simplifying one's life, one reason why I do not own a television set or a computer. I am amazed when zinepubbers apologize for not having fancy graphics or the latest DTP technology; I get out OPUNTIA on a $200 electric typewriter, scissors, glue stick, and the services of a good printing shop to run off the photocopies.

The manifest of the Lead Pencil Club points out that as the ease of communication improves, the less there is to read in the mass of shlock. Many have commented on the unfavourable signal-to-noise ratios of the Internet. Away back when memos had to be run off on a mimeograph, they were more likely to have important content in order to justify the trouble of typing up a stencil and cranking out the copies. The advent of photocopiers made it easier to waste people's time with trivial matters, but still required manual labour to distribute the copies. Thanks to the wonder of e-mail, we now can distribute trivia to hundreds or thousands of people at the push of a button. In his manifesto, Bill Henderson quotes Thoreau (1844): "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas, but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate ... We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the Old World some weeks nearer to the New, but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad, flapping American ear will be that the Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough.".

O.J. Simpson, anyone?

Not all the electronics of our modern world are to be scorned. I am a great fan of voice mail; anyone calling my house will always get an answering machine because if I am home I use it to screen my calls. One can open a letter upon receipt or set it aside for later, so the same is permissable for telephone calls. One can read a letter and send a reply by return post, or set it aside for a more convenient time, just as with replying to a message on the machine. One can toss junk mail into a wastebasket, or erase junk phone calls.

But I do not rush to get a computer and modem. Some day when my finances permit, I may indeed buy a computer. I respect its ability to store and edit text, to layout a page, or index information in a database. I doubt that I will rush to get a modem; I have nothing to say on the Internet that cannot be said with a greater degree of permanence in the pages of this or another zine. To me, Internet is like talk shows on radio or TV; 90% of the opinions expressed are crud. Perhaps the same might be said of printed material, but one doesn't have to buy a $2000 gizmo to read a book.

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The Lead Pencil Club lists Thoreau as its inspiration but perhaps they might like to consider John of Trittenheim, who lived 500 years ago. Today we agonize over the impact of electronic communications on the tradition of the printed word. Trittenheim agonized over the impact of the printed word on manuscript copying. It may seem to be quite silly from our point of view. Printing, say the traditionalists, is the quality, superior method compared to invisible electrons. They run the risk of being irrelevant as the monks who handcopied manuscripts.

In 1492, an abbot in Sponheim, Germany, was writing about the technique called 'printing'. John of Trittenheim lived during a time when his monks rebelled at having to copy books by hand. The printing press was to 1492 what the computer is to our time. Its advantages are so obvious that today we take it for granted. But the old school of thought lamented what was being lost when handcopying fell into disfavour. Trittenheim was not a proto-Luddite. His book in favour of handcopying was itself printed, not copied. DE LAUDE SCRIPTORUM (1494) was not a diatribe against printing but a defense of copying. It bears such useful analogy to our times, as we shift from print to electrons, that it was translated by Elizabeth Bongie and published in 1977 by the Alcuin Society as IN PRAISE OF SCRIBES.

Trittenheim starts off by pointing out that "all is quickly swept into oblivion unless put down in writing". He was thinking of the permanency of parchment over paper, the former favoured by copyists and the latter by printers. But even paper, properly made, will last a considerable time, measured in centuries if not thousands of years as with parchment. Consider though, what is now happening in our time. Computers store huge quantities of data on small disks. Much of this information is not intended for the ages, and if lost, no harm is done to posterity. The historians of the future can get along without billions of lines of budget estimates, company sales, chequing records, or Hansard debates on wheat price subsidies. There is, however, much which should be passed on to those who come after us. That information should be on paper, not in electronic form. Anyone can read a book, photograph or photocopy the pages, or, at worst, copy it out by hand. Copying electronic data poses a problem if there is no means to do so. Technological change is rapid and just as today's floppies cannot be read by punchcard machines of twenty years ago, so it is that they may not be readable by the machines of twenty years hence. This problem was nicely illustrated in ANSIBLE #69 in an article on the 1370-page THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SF. " ... the initial horror of discovering that the carefully preserved disks containing the full text of the first edition were obsolete eight-inch floppies whose format made sense only to Granada typesetting machines long since scrapped ... After all the professionals failed to crack the code Macdonald had the whole lot rekeyed ...".

For those convinced we live in a time of declining standards, it is well to consider the problems Trittenheim had with his monks. When he became Abbot of Sponheim in 1483, the monastery had 48 books in its library. By 1505 the library was mentioned favourably in the accounts of outlanders, and was estimated to have about 2000 volumes in many languages. The books were acquired in many ways, such as gifts from visitors and begging unwanted books from other libraries, but the traditional method of hand copying was also used. The monks were unhappy at being made to handcopy books in an age when printing was the easier and newer method. This unhappiness was such that Trittenheim wrote DE LAUDE SCRIPTORUM specifically with his monks in mind. Much of the text deals with examples of the great saints and monks of yesteryear who copied books, and of the important advantage that handcopying forces one to pay closer attention to the words. But Trittenheim was ultimately unsuccessful; he left Sponheim in 1505. The monastery went into decline, and the library was dispersed. Sponheim Monastery became defunct about the 1560s. It is now only remembered for its lazy monks and their rebellion against Trittenheim.

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DE LAUDE SCRIPTORUM was written in a Socratic style, with Trittenheim posing questions as chapter headings and then answering them in the text. Judging from some of the questions, his monks were a lazy bunch; they tried to get out of daily prayers and other theological duties, not just copying books. One wonders how the monastery lasted as long as it did.

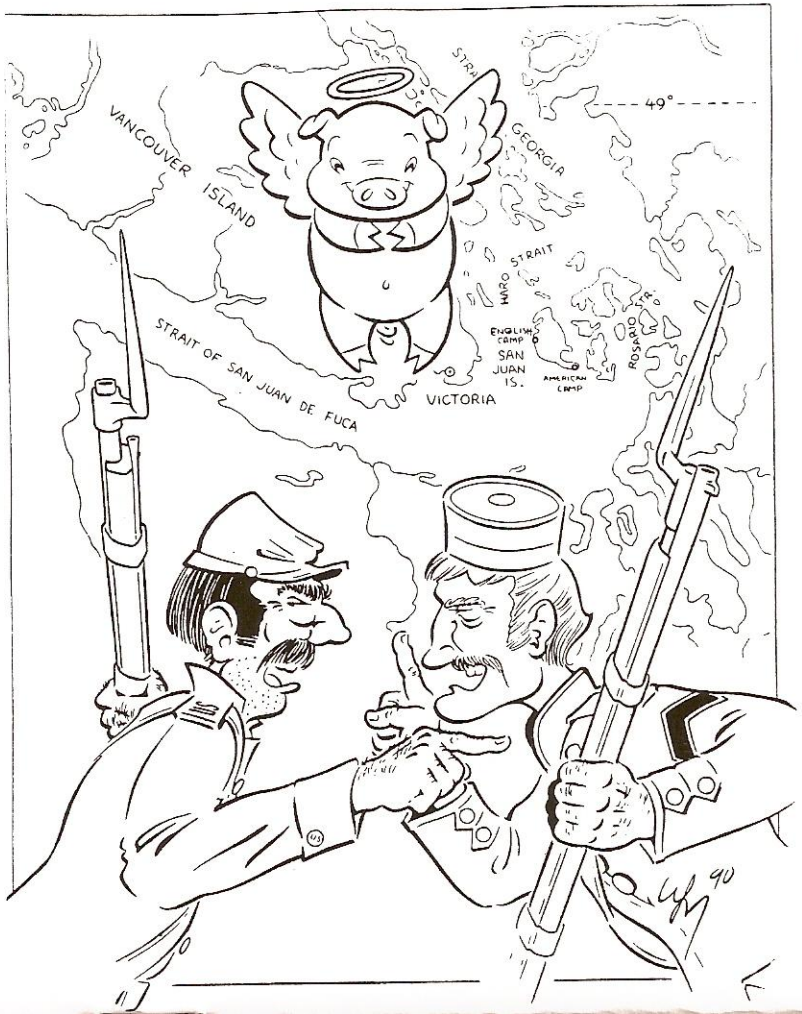
In the chapter entitled "One Should Not Cease To Copy Books Because Of The Printing Press", Trittenheim writes as follows: " ... even if many books are printed, they will still never be so widely printed that you will not be able to find something to copy that has never been put into print."

Besides all the double negatives, what struck me about this sentence was how it applies to our modern electronic world. Countless 45s and LP records will never be transferred to cassette or CD, at least not commercially. Like the copyists of back then, there are today numerous people building up cassette collections of dubbed material from vinyl records or radio shows that will not be reissued by record companies. Certainly the popular stuff will reappear on CD, whether Beatles, Frank Sinatra, or Bach. Even with that, if you want a particular performance of an orchestra, it may be impossible to get it any other way except by taping a vinyl record. For obscure plays and songs, the kind that appear on public radio or pirate stations, only home taping can preserve them. Those who tape at home, therefore, are working in the tradition of the monks who handcopied books that would never be published as printed editions.

Both printing and desktop publishing have increased the ease of putting out books, but both have been blighted by poor design and layout of their products. No new thing as Trittenheim relates in the chapter "On Orthography And The Method Of Copying": " ... care should be taken that the decoration is not itself ostentatious, in case we should value the elegance more highly than the correctness ... let us not find ourselves described by that passage in Jerome's works where he complains of ignorant men who prefer beautiful manuscripts to accurate ones. And the same attitude must be applied to a very large number of books."

In the transition from pen to type 500 years ago, and the present one from type to electrons, the critics of the new ways forget that it is not the technology but the use of it that is to blame. The Lead Pencil Club reject computer technology outright. Trittenheim did not reject printing; his defence of handcopying was printed. He spoke instead of the fact that in the rush to adopt the new, we should not necessarily reject the old. The old ways may not be as efficient but may still have their advantages. If Maine has nothing to say to Texas, that is no reason to condemn the telegraph, which was first to inform the world of the great San Francisco earthquake of 1906. If Internet is filled with verbal chaff, it also contains much of substance. The fact that I have nothing to say on Internet doesn't lead me to condemn it outright. But to the rush of people crowding along the 'cutting edge' I would say that there is still much in favour of poking along at the rear with a book in hand.

Instead of rejecting the electronic world outright, one can adapt to it at one's own pace. I paddle about in the backwater of books rather than whitewater raft with a television set. I do not own a TV set, not because I am rejecting the electronic revolution but because I am not interested in up-to-the-second news. Nothing can happen in the world that can't wait for the morning newspaper. I did not watch O.J. Simpson cruising along on TV, and gave the newspaper photo only a quick glimpse. Seen one jeep and you've seen them all. I choose the items of the electronic world that do make a difference to me, such as an answering machine and a telephone with speed dialing. The Lead Pencil Club puts me in mind of those who think it fashionable to criticize Barney the Dinosaur. I wonder why both can't remember why Internet and Barney exist in the first place.



THE BLUE AND THE SCARLET
by Taral Wayne

Dawn never came too early on the tiny island of San Juan in the summer of 1863. A bone-tired, blue-clad sentry leaned on his musket, careful to avoid the 8" bayonet. He looked out over the parapet and judged that a streak of pale gunmetal colour on the horizon was morning. The strait was as yet invisible in the western gloom, as was the mainland and the enemy. But the sentry's gaze laid only a moment on the coming light. His worry was the pitch black of the pine wilderness below it. At the north end of the island, the enemy also held a camp.

No doubt there was another sentry, facing the boy in blue from behind a similar parapet. He would be searching the darkness to the south, to warn against the Yankees. Between the two sentries lay the length and breadth of the disputed island. The blue at one end. The scarlet at the other.

Meanwhile, across the continent, the facing sides were the familiar Blue and Grey.

On the tiny island of San Juan, there were no thousands of grim Federal and Rebel troops. In fact, there were only about a hundred British regulars stationed in a Hudson's Bay Company fort at Cattle Point, and a hundred Americans camped on Griffen Bay.

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San Juan was the largest member of the Haro Archipelago, more commonly called San Juan Islands, that lay between the mouth of Puget Sound and Vancouver Island. In 1846 a treaty had been signed between the USA and Britain which ceded the entire Pacific Northwest south of the 49th parallel to the republic. The British captain James Cook had explored the Old Oregon coast, and the Hudson's Bay Company had settled it from 1821, but even so the Treaty of Washington was a compromise. The administration of President James Knox Polk claimed the entire coast as far north as 54°40', which is to say all the way to Alaska. The Treaty of Washington provided that the previously established line at 49° (1818) would extend across the Rockies to the coast. The boundary would run south, then, through the straits to the ocean, granting the whole of Vancouver Island to the British.

And that was the problem. The actual words of the settlement said that the boundary ran "to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island and thence southerly through the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca's Straits to the Pacific Ocean". To put it simply, between the island and the mainland through the middle of the channel. However, there was no single channel; there were three.

The British contended that the wording supported a boundary that ran to the south of the San Juan Islands through the Rosario Strait. The Americans claimed that the Haro Strait, to the north, was the one stipulated by treaty. A third possibility lay in a narrow, crooked channel running through the middle of the archipelago.

In this day of global thermonuclear warfare, it's hard to see what value lay in one channel over another. But in the 1850s, both nations grew increasingly aware of the military advantage of controlling the entrance to the rich hinterland of the Pacific Northwest. Britain saw possession of the islands as protection of their vulnerable colony at Victoria from land-hungry Americans. A boundary through the Rosario Strait gave it to them. Americans saw the islands as the guardian of their free sailing in and out of Puget Sound. The British, they feared, would strangle Washington Territory unless the boundary went through the Haro Strait, leaving the islands safe in American hands.

The first permanent occupants of San Juan Island were 1300 sheep. The Hudson's Bay Company had operated a salmon-curing plant as early as 1845, but that had been seasonal. In 1853, the company landed the sheep, and Charles J. Griffen, who built himself a shack at the south end of the 15-mile-long island. "The Company Farm" he called it. Had it only been the sheep population that grew over the next few years, events on the island might have taken a more peaceful course. Be that as it may, American squatters began turning up from 1858 on, until their numbers reached the alarming figure of 19. Not to be outdone, the H.B.C. sent more employees to Cattle Point, eventually numbering 16. There was now enough human population on the island for bureaucracy. Whatcom County, Washington, sent a magistrate and a tax collector, who didn't arrive too soon to find British counterparts there to greet them. The stage was now set for war.

It was Lyman Cutler's fault. He needn't have shot the pig on June 15, 1859. True, pigs belonging to the H.B.C. had made themselves free with Cutler's potato patch, and the company had chosen to ignore Cutler's repeated complaints. Still, he didn't have to shoot it. Mindful of property rights though, he offered to pay the company for the offending hog. But when the company demanded $100, roughly six month's wages, Cutler refused to pay. The company then threatened prosecution. Cutler dared them to bring charges, boasting that he was an American citizen on American soil. For a little while it looked indeed as though the British magistrate might have him dragged bodily to Victoria for trial. Then the cooler head of the governor at Victoria prevailed, and Cutler was left to defy in peace the might of the British Empire.

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Unfortunately U.S. Brigadier-General William S. Harney wanted war. He had a strong sense of devotion to Manifest Destiny, and saw in the dead hog a chance to serve it. A resourceful and possibly unstable personality, he twisted the facts. An American citizen, he said, was in immanent danger of arrest and trial by a foreign power. Americans were also threatened by attacks from Indians, inspired by the British. Both claims were patent falsehoods, but served well enough to justify his next action, which was to send 400 troops. They landed on July 27 at Griffen Bay, at the opposite end of San Juan from the Company Farm.

The HMS Tribune immediately set sail from Esquimalt bearing Royal Marines. In response to this, Harney sent another 150 men and more arms, and Captain George E. Pickett to command them. "We'll make a Bunker Hill of it.", said the irrepressible Pickett. 400 more men, if needed, waited at Fort Steilacoom on the mainland. The British in turn sent Admiral Lambert Baynes and the 84-gun man-o-war Ganges. That made five in the British fleet anchored in Griffith Bay altogether, for a total of 167 guns, 1940 sailors and men.

At this point, Washington noticed that matters had been skillfully lifted out of its hands by General Harney, and were developing along alarming lines. President Buchanan had other concerns than fomenting war with Britain in the last months of 1859. All too soon, South Carolina would pass a resolution of succession from the Union, and the batteries at Charleston would fire on Fort Sumter. The President dispatched Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott to relieve Harney, and at all costs avoid a clash of arms. Scott and his opposite number, Admiral Lambert, arrived at an understanding once it was clear that neither side relished hostilities. The matter of jurisdiction over San Juan Island would be deferred to interminable committees and arbitration in due course, but in the meantime there would be joint occupation. Civil jurisdiction would be suspended so that neither British nor American law prevailed. Thus decided, the two sides settled in for a long wait.

It proved to be a fairly amicable one. The British, forsaking the Hudson's Bay site at Cattle Point, built a blockhouse with rifle slits at Garrison Bay. Further up the beach was a parade ground, to drill the Royal Marines daily. The rest of the camp was less daunting. While the enlisted men rated nothing better than a whitewashed wooden barracks, the officers were billeted in separate houses among a pleasant row of Douglas firs. They had been planted in honour of Governor Douglas in Victoria. And could the commanding officer's quarters be without an elegant verandah, a billiard table, and a ballroom? Flower beds, tennis courts, and a croquet lawn complete the picture of a civilized Imperial lifestyle.

At the other end of the island, above Griffen Bay, the American forces built their camp. It was only a handful of clapboard huts, surrounded by a stockade of sharpened logs, but smack dab in the middle of the compound was a gigantic flagpole, painted white and flying the Stars and Stripes. Which was more than you could say about many another flagpole in the dissolved Union in those years.

As the blue and scarlet jacketed soldiers became used to the other's presence, a sense of community grew. Men fraternized; officers socialized. Picnics on the beach, and horse races highlighted the social calendar. The only real setback for the community was when the unfortunate General Picket resigned his commission in the summer of 1861. Joining the Confederate cause, he would lead the tragic charge of the Union position at Gettysburg that bears his name.

Robert E. Lee agreed to surrender terms on April 9, 1865, bringing to an end one contest of arms but not the other. The dispute over San Juan Island wasn't to be settled until 1871. Both parties, exhausted by 25 years of

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fruitless negotiation and furtive schemes, agreed to impartial arbitration. The German Emperor, Kaiser Wilhelm I, had no reason to love the British in 1871, but he was impartial enough if there ever was to be an end to the dispute. The Emperor didn't weigh the claims personally. He turned the matter over to an expert and two jurists, who could not agree. Wilhelm accepted the majority report, however, and announced his decision on May 8 that year.

"We, William, by the grace of God, German Emperor, etc, etc, ... find ... the claim of the government of the United States ... is most in accordance with the true interpretation of the Treaty." In other words, he awarded possession of the San Juan Islands to America.

At long last, the glorious Pig War was over.

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THE LOST SOUL
by Dale Speirs

Canada's earliest SF actifan, as far as we know, was Nils Helmer Frome. Born 1918 in Ratansbryn, Jamtland, Sweden, he emigrated to Canada where he became involved in SF. He died in 1962 at Llandudno, Wales. His memory was lost in Canada but Sam Moskowitz brought back the name in a 1989 book published by Moshassuck Press (Glenview, Illinois).

The book is titled "Howard Phillips Lovecraft and Nils Helmer Frome: A Recollection of One of Canada's Earliest Science Fiction Fans", and is Moshassuck Monograph #5. It has little to do with Lovecraft, dragging in his correspondence with Frome to perhaps provide better sales of this book. 110 copies were printed, and I doubt that many were sold to Canadian fans. The Trekkie generation has little interest in spending money on a book when they could use it to buy another model kit of the Enterprise. Lovecraft collecters are more common on the ground than Canucks interested in fandom history, and would provide a greater sale of the book.

The book is more properly called an anthology, being a collection of reprinted articles, extracts of Frome's material, and miscellaneous items. Much of what we know of Frome comes from correspondence and other files of Moskowitz. Others who had made reference in passing to Frome or other aspects of early fandom kept Moskowitz busy with rebuttals based on facts, not guesses, that he had stored in his collection.

Starting off the anthology is a reprint of a 1985 article in SCIENCE-FICTION STUDIES in which Moskowitz replies to a review of David Ketterer's about the book YEARS OF LIGHT (dealing with early Canfan Leslie Croutch). Frome did a cover for the April 1942 LIGHT, so he certainly had a connection with Croutch. But to confuse the unwary, James Blish used Frome's name for articles the latter had never written. Frome did write, but was a better artist.

Details of Frome's life were hard to come by until the May

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1983 issue of the zine NEW CANADIAN FANDOM, when Michael Dann and Brenda Yvonne Halak published their research on him, based on interviews with Frome's family. This is reprinted in the book at hand. To summarize briefly, Frome was a year old when his mother died. He was sent to live with a foster family who later adopted him. The family emigrated to Canada in 1924. Frome went to art school in Vancouver, but spent much of his life working in lumber camps and mills. He was a loner, had trouble getting on with people, and changed jobs frequently. It appears that he was above-average intelligence and bored easily. When in his twenties, he developed a drinking problem that was probably the death of him years later.

During WW2, Frome was frozen as a lumberman, that is, ordered by the government to remain in a strategic job, and was not allowed to change jobs or enlist. After the war, he suffered health problems that left him unsuitable for heavy labour. In the 1950s he worked various jobs, mostly as a freelance artist. He returned to Sweden to visit family, and is last heard of when he died in Wales, working as a part-time boilerman for a hotel. He died March 27, 1962, completely forgotten by Canfandom.

Moskowitz then goes on to reprint material from obscure zines and sources that no one else will likely have. This is the most useful part of the book, providing primary sources that a student of fanhistory would not otherwise have access to. First up is a Frome article reprinted from the March 1940 THE GOLDEN ATOM, titled "But The Stars Still Shine!". This is an account of how Frome entered the SF hobby. He lists the pulp stories that caught him, or, in one case, the artwork, as he had not yet learned to read English. By the 1940s he was expressing his contempt for the present-day SF, a clear case of the Golden Age being twelve.

There follows a series of Frome stories that demonstrate why he was never a famous author. Also reproduced is a holograph manuscript just as unreadable. Frome was a talented artist, but his writings can be forgotten with no loss to posterity. Next is a section of letters, with some from Lovecraft to justify the title of the book. Of greater interest is his correspondence with Claire Beck and with Moskowitz.

The final section of the book contains reproductions of Frome's zines and artwork, basically impossible to obtain elsewhere. Frome published SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES, which started off with the date October 1936 but was not finally issued until January 1937. Frome illustrated each copy by hand, and as he became bored doing the same illo over and over again, there is considerable variation from one copy to the next. The second and final issue of SUPRAMUNDANE STORIES was dated Spring 1938, and contained a Lovecraft story.

Frome also did a one-shot called FANTASY PICTORIAL which was distributed at the first National SF Convention on May 29, 1938, organized by Moskowitz. This was somewhat like WOOF, an apazine produced at modern WorldCons. Let me quote Moskowitz: "One of the methods of raising money for the affair was to ask fans across the country to prepare fifty copies of a special fan magazine to be contributed to the convention. These would not be available elsewhere and contributors would receive a copy of every other fan magazine and the excess would be sold to help cover expenses. About fourteen magazines were produced, among them a hectographed FANTASY PICTORIAL by Nils H. Frome, which was not his best either from the standpoint of the artwork or reproduction and did not even have a logo printed on it".

In the 1940s, Frome did artwork for various zines such as CANADIAN FANDOM, of which Moskowitz illustrates some covers. After that, Frome quietly faded out of the fan world. Since his zines and other work are not found in the marketplace, it is not surprising that he was eventually forgotten. Moskowitz has done a great service to restore Frome's work in a wider distribution of a book.