

Books&People

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Announcing the Digital Collections Portal

by Erin Schreiner, Special Collections Librarian

The Library is pleased to announce that we have begun work on a new project, the Digital Collections Portal, to provide Library members and the public with unprecedented access to our historic special collections. The Digital Collections Portal will host a powerful digital database on the Library's website, allowing users to explore digitized archival material from our collection in new and engaging ways. It is made possible by the generous support of an anonymous donor.

Library members are already familiar with our work to conserve, transcribe, and digitize our historic early circulation records from 1789 to 1792. We are very proud of this resource, which documents the literary tastes and reading habits of New Yorkers of the Founding Era. The current site contains digital images of pages from the original charging ledgers and transcribed records from the ledgers themselves, showing the books borrowed



Receipt for the purchase of six Windsor chairs at the Library's first home. This image and the others in this article are examples of materials that will be digitized and hosted via the Digital Collections Portal.

From the Head Librarian



Mark Bartlett (right) with Trustee Ralph S. Brown Jr.

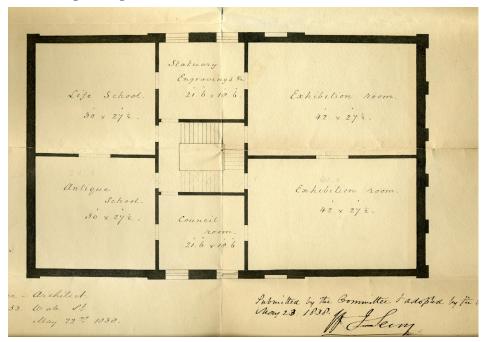
Summer is the time when we say goodbye to a full winter and spring season of Library lectures, book discussion groups, Children's programs, writing groups, award nights, and more. I want to thank those of you who had attended these varied programs and have shared feedback with the Library staff. In early September, you'll receive our Events newsletter. It will be a great season! Book early, pay your registration in advance, and attend often—it's your Library.

A highlight of this summer issue of *Books & People* is a reflective and refreshing address by Richard Peck, who welcomed new members of the Library at a May reception in the Members' Room. His remarks are inspirational. I am pleased we can share them with you.

With my warm wishes to each of you for a healthy and happy summer, and lots of good reading—

Mark Bartlett
Head Librarian

Announcing the Digital Collections Portal continued



The second floor of our building at Broadway and Leonard Street.

by early members with a brief biographical sketch for each. The site also links to the Library's online catalog, showing the books from our early collections that survive with us today. Since launching the Library's new website last year, we have completed the transcription of the next surviving ledgers, covering circulation history at the Library from 1799 to 1805. As we thought about how to publish this set of data online, we imagined new possibilities for how the information could look on our website. For example, we've collected addresses for many of our early members: what if we could plot them on maps of the city, both of the past and present? What if we could show who visited the Library on a particular day, alongside or even within an original floor plan of the building the Library occupied at that time, with links to images of the Library's original furnishings from our archives? Or see a reader's circulation history alongside a timeline of historic events in the city? What about displaying the charging ledger itself not as individual pages, but as a digital book that one can read through, page by page?

The website currently in place is rich in information, but we need a more powerful back-end database to support advanced searching, create maps, construct timelines, and link information to digitized archival content. Since May, Brynn White (Digital Projects Assistant), Matthew Bright (Catalog Librarian and Systems Assistant), and I have been working with Whirl-i-Gig, a Brooklyn-based consulting firm, to customize their open-source software to store and organize the data from the Early Circulation Records Project. Opensource software, like Whirl-i-Gig's Collective Access, is available freely to the general public and developed collaboratively. The improvements and updates that users like us make to the program become publicly available to the entire community of Collective Access users around the world. The Library is proud to be part of a network of cultural institutions working with Collective Access (such as the New York State Archives, the American Museum of Natural History, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Chicago Film Archives) to facilitate the use and awareness of primary source materials documenting American cultural heritage.

The second phase of the project will be the design and launch of the interactive Digital Collections Portal on the Library's website. The Portal will feature the content currently available online from the Early Circulation Records Project, with the addition of thousands more records and many new members to discover from our second charging ledger. This new site will position the Library to digitize more of our charging ledgers, as well as additional content from our institutional archives to complement the existing Early Circulation Records database. Increasing digital access to our archival records—from acquisitions records to librarian's papers to visitors books to shareholders' records—will create more points of entry from which researchers and casual browsers alike can explore the Library's history. For example, the Library's early members often bought and sold shares to and from one another, suggesting (though not confirming) otherwise undocumented connections between individuals. By digitizing our records of shareholders, it will be easier to reconstruct networks of readers extending beyond the boundaries of the Library and into the realm of daily life. In the future, a wide variety of digitized materials will also enrich the historical context within which such connections come to light. For example, many Library members of the past were members of other social, political, and cultural organizations in New York City, just as our members are today. It is easy to group these individuals in the digital environment, so that we can compare reading histories of members of external groups—such as Aaron Burr's Tammany Society—at the click of a mouse. Digital copies of acquisition and financial records can also show how Society Library readers were part of a broader network of intellectual activity along the Atlantic coasts by connecting them, through the books they read, to booksellers not only in North America but also in England. Eventually, we hope to facilitate the study of the economies of print by digitizing and transcribing our early acquisition records.

The Library is also exploring ways for our members and the general public to enrich the digital content that we will be publishing online. Forms and research tools on the new website will allow users to submit biographical information about an early member, trace books in the collection to the Library's original printed catalogs, and even transcribe digitized manuscript

documents directly. Library staff will review information submitted by users, and together we can create a resource that will grow to document the Library's history in rich and engaging ways.

I hope that you are as excited about this project as we are, and welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions for the Digital Collections Portal. What kinds of materials would you like to see digitized? Are you excited by the idea of participating in transcription or biographical research? What kinds of things would you like to be able to do with the records of reading and readership at the Library? Email me at *eschreiner@nysoclib.org* and let me know what you think.



A preliminary sketch of the entrance to the Broadway building.

Seeking Information



The Library plans an upcoming exhibition related to Sarah Parker Goodhue. Mrs. Goodhue (1828-1917) was a grand lady of Manhattan society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her bequest to the Library included the portraits in the main stairwell, the china in the Members' Room, and funds that have supported many of our activities to the present day. The Library's bequest society is named in her honor.

The Library is seeking members and friends with connections to the Goodhue family or to Sarah Parker Goodhue. These might include diaries, letters, photographs, or other memorabilia. If you have an item that you would be willing to share with the Library, please contact Harriet Shapiro, Head of Exhibitions, at 212.288.6900 x221 or hshapiro@nysoclib.org.

"The Damned Scotch Etcher":

Muirhead Bone's Scenes of War at the New York Society Library

By Harriet Shapiro, Head Of Exhibitions

In August 1916, Muirhead Bone arrived in France. The man with the singular name was headed to the Western Front on assignment for Wellington House. The war propaganda unit of the British government, established weeks after the outbreak of World War One, had tapped Bone to depict the war-torn landscape along the front lines. In this 1916 photograph (below) we catch a glimpse of the Scottish etcher crossing a road in Maricourt, France. Sketchbook tucked under his right arm, Bone leans on his walking stick, up to his ankles in the infamous mud of the Somme.

time, more than ninety others, including Wyndham Lewis, Paul Nash, Eric Kennington, and William Orpen, would record for posterity their impressions of World War One for the Wellington House Official War Artists Programme.

Shortly after his arrival in France, Bone plunged into the Second Battle of the Somme. Now an honorary second lieutenant, he dismissed the chauffeur and car supplied by the General Staff and ventured out into the sulphurous *plein air* of the battlefield. With twigs of charcoal he





Left: Muirhead Bone, notebook under his arm, crossing the road in Maricourt, France, 1916. (Photographer unknown.) Above: "On the Somme: In the Old No Man's Land."

As he made his way across the muddy waters swirling around him, Bone was well aware of the rules, spoken or unspoken, that governed his activity as an artist in France. It was abundantly clear to Bone that the agency believed pictorial propaganda (preferably minus dead or wounded bodies) would shore up public support for the war. Bone's friends, convinced his impressive talents as a draughtsman and etcher would well serve the government's cause, had championed his case at Wellington House. If Bone was the first British artist to depict the war for the government, in

scratched into the pages of his small white notebooks the smouldering ruins of Delville Wood, Montauban, High Wood, and Fricourt, once havens of rural French life. In some places, little was left to record. The "gaps and absences" in his drawings, as one critic describes them, were significant. So too were the burnt stumps of trees and small crosses angled out of the damaged earth, visual props for the truth he did not dare commit to paper.

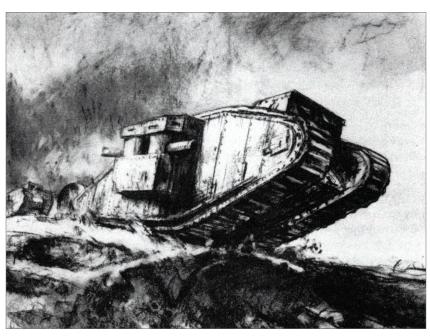
The pace Bone set himself was prodigious; by early October,

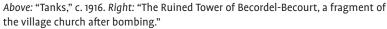
working with charcoal, pencil, pen and ink, he had completed 150 drawings, including bombed German trenches near Contalmaison, columns of British soldiers heading towards the front, a Red Cross depot at Boulogne, a view of the Battle of the Somme, and the ruins of Ypres with the Cloth Hall in the distance. Bone's training as an architect (as a young man he also studied at the Glasgow School of Art) and his background as a draughtsman and etcher served him well while committing to paper the wounded landscape of northern France. In the words of one critic, his drawings "should not be absent from any collection of war literature." Art historian Sue Malvern praises the artist's work as "unpretentious, genuine and personally observed, not fabricated. It was a kind of stylistic paraphrase for the moderateness of free thinking and rational Englishmen." Kenneth Clark once described the exactitude of Bone's drawings as documents "one would produce as evidence before a commission on bomb damage."

Currently on display in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery are five of the drawings Bone sketched during his tours of duty on the Western Front. They are part of a collection of sixty plates, issued in 1918 by the War Office and donated to this Library in 1920 by Henry A. Forster. They include "The

cleverly chosen to disguise its Wellington House connection. In England the publication of Bone's war drawings received a mixed reception. The poet Wilfred Owen may have been referring to Bone's work when he spoke disparagingly of those "Somme pictures." The drawings, in the words of one historian, were a "travelogue composed by an uninvolved spectator." And, from a wag, "they were too true to be good." Even Montague, in an essay that slipped past the gatekeepers, questions whether Bone's drawings weave "some sort of web of beautiful untruth over your eyes, lest you should see and know 'war as it is." Still, the public in this pre-electronic age was hungry to see scenes of front-line life; in one week more than 25,000 visitors attended a wartime exhibition of Bone's drawings held in Sheffield, England.

Bone himself understood his own limitations, no doubt aware, as one critic expressed it, that he "lacked the creative nerve to summarily include the obscenities of war." After visiting a dressing station with Montague, Bone writes, "we went back to a slope of the down behind and sat down to eat our lunch. Below us was the battle and despite the mesmerism of Montague's calm elation at the scene, my sandwiches and my teeth didn't seem to keep proper time together."





Night Picket", "A Via Dolorosa, Mouquet Farm," and "Welsh Soldiers." In "Tanks," a small 20 x 28 inch drawing, Bone sketched the first image of the machine destined to revolutionize modern warfare, which had just made its appearance on the battlefield.

The journalist and intelligence officer *C*. E. Montague wrote the short descriptions accompanying two hundred of the artist's drawings in a series titled *The Western Front* published by *Country Life* magazine. The publication was

The Glasgow-born artist viewed his work with a cool and analytical eye. "I did not like to imagine war scenes," he writes, "and so only drew what I saw, and this only when I had a chance to digest it. This limited me very much and I am afraid resulted in rather prosaic work." Both Bone and Montague shared a certain diffidence about the quality of their wartime work. Montague once referred to the text he wrote for the Bone drawings as "drivelettes of letterpress." Whatever his failures, it's clear Bone did not sufficiently appreciate what one observer has called his "accomplished,



"Sleeping Wounded From the Somme."

almost nerveless, observational skills." Sometimes, as in "Moonlight, Rouen Cathedral," Bone moves beyond the codes governing his craft. Here the various markings of charcoal, like the lines of a funeral dirge, express the darkness of war.

The war took its toll. Exhausted from his three-month assignment along the Western Front, Bone returned to England. His brother-in-law, artist Francis Dodd, replaced him on the Somme. But in April 1917, after having worked for three weeks with the Royal Navy at Rosyth, Bone returned yet again to France. The Poet Laureate John Masefield, also on assignment for Wellington House, describes spending part of one uncomfortable day with the artist. Bone kept him waiting for several hours while he drew scenes of Thiepval. "We agreed to meet at 3:30 at a dump in the valley...I went up to see the Hohenzollern redoubt, which was the devil of a place...Then at 3:15 I went down to the dump & waited. The d____d Scotch etcher never turned up till 5:15... so you may guess the mood I was in... Never again, if I can help it, does a Scotch etcher make me wait 2 hours on a dump."

By late summer Bone was physically and emotionally spent. "I watched him the other day," his wife wrote to a friend, "looking at a pencil as though he didn't know what to do

with it...Isn't it possible for the Authorities to consider that 500 drawings in a year ought to be counted for an artist's righteousness and to let him have space to breathe?"

The Wellington House artists who followed Muirhead Bone to the Western Front were less cautious. Dead bodies appeared more frequently in scenes of war—the horror of the conflict more prominently expressed. After a visit to Brigade Headquarters up the line, Paul Nash wrote, "I am no longer an artist interested and curious, I am a messenger who will bring back word from the men who are fighting to those who want the war to go on forever. Feeble, inarticulate, will be my message, but it will have a bitter truth and may it burn their lousy souls."

Bone may not have responded to the scenes of death and destruction on the Western Front with Nash's fury. But his legacy remains. He was the first official war artist to confront the horror of the battlefield and as such holds a unique position in the visual history of World War One.

The drawings of Muirhead Bone are on view in From the Western Front and Beyond: the Writings of World War One in the Peluso Family Exhibition Gallery. The exhibition runs through November 15, 2014.

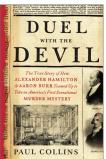
The New York City Book Awards 2013

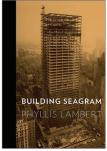
Founded in 1996, the awards honor books of literary quality or historical importance that, in the opinion of the selection committee, evoke the spirit or enhance appreciation of New York City. As part of the Book Awards, the Library also presents the Hornblower Award to an excellent New York City-related book by a first-time author.

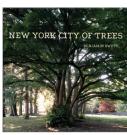
The Book Awards ceremony was held May 6. The Library was honored to have winners Benjamin Swett, Adam Goldman, and Phyllis Lambert in attendance, with Jacob Lewis, Vice-President at Crown Trade, accepting for Paul Collins. Trustee Ellen M. Iseman and Book Awards Jury Chair Lucienne S. Bloch spoke about the importance of New York City writing. *Photos by Karen Smul*.



New York City Book Awards winner Phyllis Lambert signs a copy of her book *Building* Seagram for juror Andrew Scott Dolkart.











Book Awards Jury Chair Lucienne S. Bloch with Claude Bloch.



Library Trustee Ellen M. Iseman



The winners

THE 2013-2014 NEW YORK CITY BOOK AWARDS ARE GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY ELLEN M. ISEMAN.

The Twelfth Annual Young Writers Awards

The annual Young Writers Awards honor excellent writing by students in the Library community. The winners, honorable mentions, and all who participated were honored at a ceremony and reception on May 20. Author judges Dave Johnson, Robert Quackenbush, Carol Weston, and Edra Ziesk presented the awards and offered encouraging words about the writing life. Visit the For Children page at *www.nysoclib.org* to read the winning entries.

Winners:

Charlotte Lily Borthwick for "Coin Chaos" (3rd-4th Grade Poetry)

Jeremy Kogan for "I Hear America Texting" (5th-6th Grade Poetry)

Max Bouratoglou for "untitled"

(7th-8th Grade Poetry)

Gregory R. Stone for "To Hatch a Dragon" (3rd-4th Grade Prose)

J.J. Yu for "Salmini's Story"

(5th-6th Grade Prose)

Billie M. Koffman for "Years of Change"

(7th-8th Grade Prose)

Ariana McGinn for "The Flag" (9th-12th Grade Prose)

Honorable Mentions:

Lillian Wilensky Hohn for "Ballet" (3rd-4th Grade Poetry)

Juliet Elizabeth Viera for "Cotton Waves"

(3rd-4th Grade Poetry)

Benjamin Sokolow for "Inside My Bed"

(5th-6th Grade Poetry)

Neve Diaz-Carr for "Clapping Belongs to

Everyone"

(3rd-4th Grade Prose)

Emily Gaw for "You"

(5th-6th Grade Prose)



The 2014 Young Writers Awards judges (back row, left) with Jeanette Sarkisian Wagner and Paul A. Wagner (center) and the Young Writers Awards honorees.

THE YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS ARE GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY JEANETTE SARKISIAN WAGNER AND PAUL A. WAGNER.

The Goodhue Society

The Library hosted its annual celebration for members of the bequest society named for one of our most generous benefactors, Sarah Parker Goodhue. A special reception preceded Joan Breton Connelly's April 9 lecture on *The Parthenon Enigma*.

Event introducer Francesca Stanfill Nye and author Joan Breton Connelly

To learn more about the Goodhue Society, contact Diane Srebnick at 212.288.6900 x214 or *dsrebnick@nysoclib.org*.



Goodhue Society Chair William J. Dean and Elizabeth Winthrop

The Chair's Circle

Members of the Library's Chair's Circle were honored at a special reception on May 14 at the home of Trustee Barbara Goldsmith. Author and Trustee Robert A. Caro spoke about "Trollope's Politicians—and Mine."

Chair's Circle members are those individual and foundation donors who provide leadership support for the Library and thereby play a critical role in sustaining and nurturing its programs and services. If you are interested in learning more about the Chair's Circle, please contact Director of Development Joan Zimmett at 212.288.6900 x207 or jzimmett@nysoclib.org.







Above: Head Librarian Mark Bartlett, Chair of the Board Barbara Hadley Stanton, and Trustees Barbara Goldsmith and Robert A. Caro. *Left*: Nancy Harrow and Jan Krukowski and Joanna and Daniel Rose.

Visitors from the London Library

On May 1st, the Library welcomed two visitors from the London Library. Interim Development Director Alison Graham and Development Manager Bethany McNaboe were given a tour of the building and then met with Mark Bartlett, Carolyn Waters, Joan Zimmett and Diane Srebnick. All agreed that the two institutions have a great deal in common. In fact, upon her return to London, Ms. Graham wrote, "We so much enjoyed visiting you and it felt very much like home."

The London Library, founded in 1841, is the UK's leading literary institution. With more than one million books and periodicals in over 50 languages, the collection includes works from the 16th century to the latest publications. Membership is open to everyone. To learn more about the London Library, see www.londonlibrary.co.uk.



Bethany McNaboe and Alison Graham of the London Library, and Head Librarian Mark Bartlett

World War One Centennial



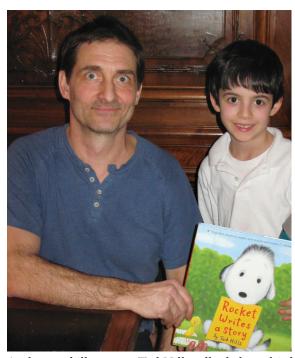
Pianist Katherine Addleman and soprano Kate Hurney presented songs of the Great War on March 30, in connection with our exhibition From the Western Front and Beyond.

Annual Meeting of Shareholders



The Annual Meeting of Shareholders on April 16 honored three long-serving staff members: Linnea Holman Savapoulas: 35 years Janet Howard: 50 years George Muñoz: 10 years

Children's Events





Author and illustrator Tad Hills talked about his books, including *Rocket Writes a Story*, in February, and author/illustrator Chris Raschka demonstrated his art in May.

The New Members Party









The Library welcomed members who joined in the past year at a party on May 28. After a reception with remarks by longtime member and author Richard Peck, guests embarked on self-guided tours of the Library. Mr. Peck's remarks can be found on page 14.

Celebrating the Lyn Chase Poetry Collection

Trustee Emerita Lyn Chase has generously donated her personal poetry collection to the Library, to be housed in the newly renovated shelving in the Whitridge Room. On June 4, Library Board members and friends celebrated Mrs. Chase and her wonderful gift. Speakers included Chair of the Board Barbara Hadley Stanton, Trustee Jeannette

Watson Sanger, Head Librarian Mark Bartlett, and authors Jonathan Galassi and Edward Hirsch. In addition to service as a Library Trustee from 1996 to 2012, Mrs. Chase was president of the Academy of American Poets for many years and counts as her friends many of the authors featured in her collection.















A Welcome to the New York Society Library

by Richard Peck

These remarks were given at the New Members Party on May 28, 2014.

Ladies and Gentlemen, new friends and old, welcome to this Library that was forced to suspend operations for the War of Independence in 1774, but is, as you see, up and running again.

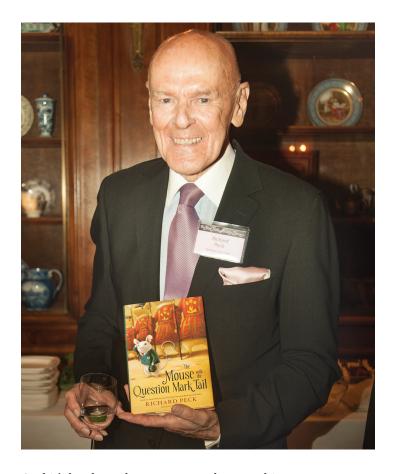
We gather in this house heavy with history and built of books to welcome our newest members in the clear recollection that we were new members once, that on one happy day we walked for the first time through that paneled portico and those mildly malfunctional doors into this magical, highly unlikely, slightly eccentric, clearly anachronistic alternate universe...this oasis of full sentences in an arid desert of text messages.

In a city that regularly knocks down beautiful old buildings to make way for ugly new ones, in a city that regularly forgets its past, this place remembers every moment. These walls rose right at the end of a grand tradition of fine family homes that had begun as this Library began in the step-gabled red brick of Dutch downtown New York and ended with a flourish of limestone two hundred years later in this neighborhood.

A way of life too proud to persist, but pinned to the page just in time by Edith Wharton, whose father was a member of this Library, and by William Dean Howells and by Henry James. One wouldn't be greatly surprised to come face-to-face with Daisy Miller languishing along these stacks. And since real life is too neatly arranged for fiction, Henry James lay dying as this house was being built.

Its beating heart lies below—the card catalog with its burnished wood cabinetry, its drawers rolling out like invitations, the often enigmatic notations on the cards written by hands long folded and still. As long as there is a card catalog, our side has not lost, because card catalogs never crash.

This is a place with its face to the future and so, in a small miracle, space was found where no space was to expand the area devoted to children and young readers, because the most important members of this Library were born in the twenty-first century. They are New Yorkers born after 9/11.



And it's harder to be young now than anything we can remember: harder as the video game and its culture of death reach the very young before books can. Harder to be young in the home where screens glow hot into the night long after parents are fast asleep. Harder because when you can text from the dinner table, you're too far from everybody.

Our most important members are the youngest among us because it will be up to them to defend books and the ideas in books and the privacy to read them after we are gone. And they will be tested as we haven't been because this is a family library, and governments expand at the expense of families.

I came to this Library as a writer, one whose favorite readers are young, though I don't believe in separate books for separate generations. In all my books aimed at the young, there's an old person reaching across a lifetime to touch a young hand, and the older I get, the stronger that old person becomes. In my newest book, *The Mouse With the Question*

Mark Tail, I've gone about as far as I can go in that direction because the strong old character is Queen Victoria.

Many a book has been born in this Library. Books are still being born here. Listen carefully and you'll hear the cries of pain. Many of my books have been born in these stacks because nobody but a reader ever became a writer. We write from observation, not experience. We write from research, not recollection. The sacred secret of writing all fiction is this: a story is always about something that never happened to the author.

Beatrix Potter was never a rabbit. J.K. Rowling did not attend Hogwarts School. Stephen Crane was born after the Civil War. And the author of *1984* died in 1950.

And so every book begins in the library in the hope that it will end there. I will spare you autobiography except to share with you how I found my way to this Library. A long time ago I was commissioned to write a big, thick historical novel, and I could choose the topic. That was no problem. I'd write about everybody's favorite disaster, the sinking of the *Titanic*. And so with exquisite slowness the *Titanic* took four years to sink in my writing room, with its deck plans pinned up around the walls the whole time.

This was so long ago that there were survivors of the *Titanic* among us. I spent four years with my heart in my mouth, fearing I'd get something wrong and do violence to their memories. And so when I had a readable manuscript—and for me that's always the sixth revision—I plucked up the courage to approach Walter Lord, the author of A *Night to Remember*. Actually that's not quite what happened. I had no courage to pluck up and so I plucked up my editor's courage, and she approached him.

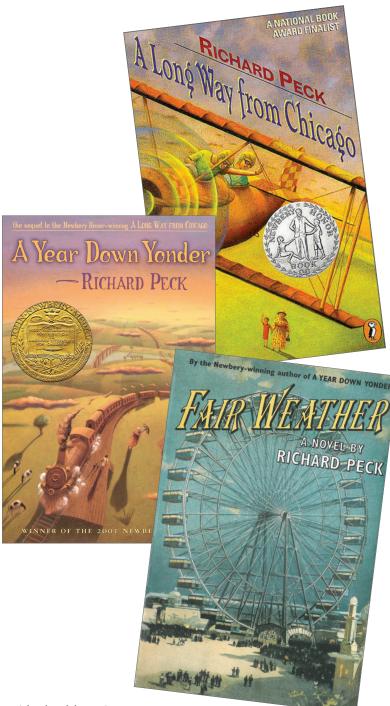
With the generosity that characterized him, Walter Lord read my manuscript and gave it a clean bill of health, and a couple of suggestions. And the book became *Amanda Miranda*.

Walter Lord was a luminary of this Library, and it was through him I found my way here—to this Library which is what all libraries would be in a perfect world in its stacks and its staffing and the leadership of Mark Bartlett.

This community of writers—present and past,
This community of readers—present and future,
This community of people young and old who believe in our
hearts that nothing is real until it's written down, that the
story unites what the computer divides, and that wherever
you're going, every journey begins in the library.

Welcome to this feast.

Richard Peck May 28, 2014



Richard Peck has written more than thirty novels, and in the process has become one of the country's most highly respected writers for children. In fact the *Washington Post* called him "America's best living author for young adults." A versatile writer, he is beloved by middle-graders as well as young adults for his historical and contemporary comedies and coming-of-age novels. He lives in New York City and spends a great deal of time traveling around the country to speaking engagements at conferences, schools, and libraries.

Mr. Peck is the first children's book author to have received a National Humanities Medal. He is a Newbery Medal winner (for A Year Down Yonder), a Newbery Honor winner (for A Long Way from Chicago), a two-time National Book Award finalist, and a two-time Edgar Award winner. In addition, he has won a number of major honors for the body of his work, including the Margaret A. Edwards Award, the ALAN Award, and the Medallion from the University of Southern Mississippi.



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