

April 1994

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Recommended Citation

Newlin, Lyman (1994) "Papa Lyman Remembers / The Old Economy Bookstore," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 6: Iss. 2, Article 15.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.1467>

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Papa Lyman Remembers

by Lyman Newlin (Book Trade Counselor)



In 1933 my father and mother scraped together enough money to afford an auto trip from our home thirty miles north of Topeka, Kansas, to Chicago to see the World's Fair. My mother had been taken as a little girl by her parents from their Missouri farm to see the 1893 Fair in Chicago and she believed her three children should have the same experience. Of course we didn't stay in hotels. We had some relatives and many friends as Dad had been a pastor of a small Presbyterian Church on the West Side in the early twenties. Of course, we would have no expense.

One of these friends was sister-in-law to Laurance Paine, sole owner of the Economy Book Store at 50 South Clark Street. Laurance had started the business with \$500 he had inherited from his uncle

who was the Wilcox of Wilcox and Follett. (Wilcox was also responsible for the founding of the original Barnes & Noble in New York, but that's another story.)

Mr. Paine had just opened a branch store around the corner at 114 West Madison Street because of the prosperity that the Fair was bringing to the City. The Depression had not really hit bottom yet, but enough books were being sold by families to pay bills so that secondhand bookstores were enjoying a fairly prosperous time of it. I think the rent for the store was something like \$50 per month. Incidentally St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church now stands on this site. Does any other book person have a cathedral marking the spot of induction to the world of learning?

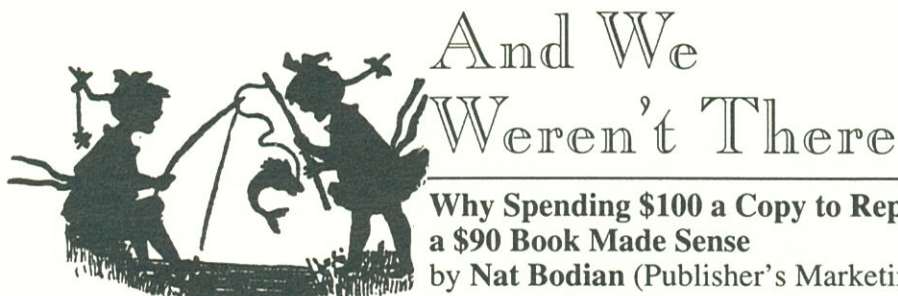
At about the time we landed in Chicago, Franklin D. Roosevelt inaugurated the National Recovery Act. The work week was limited to 40 hours and a minimum wage of \$15 per week was part of the deal. The Economy had been getting 60 hours of work for ten dollars a week for new people. Of course experienced book clerks might make up to eighteen.

Because Mr. Paine's sister-in-law Bonnie Patterson, had been my Sunday School teacher, she knew me well enough to risk recommending me as a beginner in the new branch store. Also she knew that I had had some German, philosophy and English courses at the University of Chicago which education I had to abandon because of financial deficiency. I was particularly proud of a good grade I had received in the great Robert Morse Lovett's course on the English novel of the late nineteenth century. My philosophy teacher was George Meade, who would never publish during his lifetime, but I notice that Pickering & Chatto of London has just recently brought out a multi-volume edition of his work.

In mid-August I started at the Economy branch from 5 p.m. to midnight with 45 minutes off for supper (no coffee breaks in those days), six nights a week. One night off per week was allowed, but it was never the same. And fifteen bucks a week was manna from heaven. I was able to secure room and board with a family with four kids who had been parishioners of Dad's church. The price was \$6 per week, including laundry.

Literary luminaries made the rounds of the Loop's secondhand bookstores. Vincent Starrett was a regular. Carl Sandburg came in once or twice and Carl Van Vechten was another who came frequently.

I kept the shelves stocked, saw to it that the bargain table which we put out on the Madison St. sidewalk was filled with books ranging in price from a nickel apiece to a dime to a quarter. For a dollar we always gave 20% off, that is a dollar would fetch 25 nickel books. I still have some of the fabulous Modern Library titles which came from the nickel table. Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer had recently bought ML from the Boni brothers and remaindered a lot of the slow moving titles. I still have a lot of them but I lost my *Portrait of the Artist*, which Cerf said was the first ML, when fire



And We Weren't There

Why Spending \$100 a Copy to Reprint a \$90 Book Made Sense

by Nat Bodian (Publisher's Marketing Consultant)

Does it make sense to reprint large books at \$100 a copy when they're priced to sell at \$90 a copy? You bet it does — but only under special circumstances as I will show you.

As a former marketing manager at Wiley, my responsibilities included monitoring inventories in the Interscience product line and placing reprint orders when I deemed it appropriate. Among the products in my line was the *Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology*, a 25-volume work that was published over a six-year period and had a 15-year life cycle between editions.

When publication began on the third edition, new volumes of the third edition came out every three months. This meant that from the time a subscriber got volume 1 until the last volume was to be published, there was a six-year wait. In the meantime, orders accumulated for complete sets of the *Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia* and many buyers were willing to take the existing complete edition.

However, when the Third Edition was started, more than nine years had passed since the end of the previous edition, for which individual volumes still sold at \$90 per copy. I studied my back orders — I could fill at least 25 or 30 set orders if only I had sufficient copies of all volumes of the preceding edition. But two of the volumes in the earlier edition had long been out of print. I got a print estimate for reprint of 100 of each of the missing two volumes. The reprint cost was about \$100 per copy, or \$10,000 to reprint 100. A quick calculation told me that if I invested the \$20,000 on the reprints, I could immediately sell 25 sets at \$1500 each for a quick \$37,500, or thereabouts.

I did the reprint, immediately made up 50 sets of the Second Edition, and filled all back orders. Over succeeding years, all of the made-up sets were sold. As well, many of the single copies sold at \$90 each, so the \$20,000 reprint investment was repaid many times over. ☛

wrecked havoc with my library.

Mr. Paine (the owner) was in ill health and did not always come into the store. In fall he was confined to bed and told by his doctor to forget his business for awhile. Unbeknownst to the M.D. and to Mrs. Paine, however, he bribed a nurse and had a telephone installed under his bed. This was so he could check on business from Winnetka. Though he surely knew that the 25 miles between home and store could make a great deal of difference in the weather, that did not keep him from calling the store when it rained in Winnetka to make sure that we had brought the books in.

The Madison Street branch was located next to the old Brevort Hotel. During the fall of 1933 the New Deal affected the repeal of the Volstead Act — Prohibition. The hotel had a beautiful Crystal Circle Bar which had been unused for nearly fifteen years. It's hard to describe the celebration that went on in

Chicago's Loop that night but I remember my first drink of legal booze. It wasn't nearly as much fun as sneaking a shot of Kansas moonshine! Nearby was a gymnasium which was a hangout for famous wrestlers and ball players. I remember King Levinsky and other boxers like him. Local and out-of-town fans would get into an argument about some statistic or other. They would wind up at the bar and the argument still wasn't settled. Someone would say, "I'll settle that," and send someone over to the bookstore to get a copy of Farroll's *Famous Prizefighters* which would settle the bets. Later the copy would come back to the bookstore on a tray with a couple of Old Fashions. I've never been able to stand one since!

That about finishes year one. In September 1934 the Economy branch was closed and I started at Wilcox and Follett, the wholesaler of textbooks. ☞



International Dateline

Section Editor: **Glen M. Secor, J.D.** (Yankee Book Peddler, Inc.)

A note from the Section Editor —

I received only one contribution for this issue, that being from Liz Chapman, our U.K. correspondent. Many thanks to Liz. Some of our other correspondents have promised to come through for the next issue. Still, we need more sources. If you know someone from outside the U.S. who would like to contribute to this column, or if you come across news items of international significance which you think should be shared here, please get in touch with me. You can reach me at Yankee Book Peddler, Inc., 999 Maple Street, Contoocook, NH 03229. Fax: 603-746-5628. Email: gsecor@office.ybp.com.

FOLLETT REPORT ON U.K. HIGHER EDUCATION IS RELEASED

by **Liz Chapman**

OXFORD, U.K. — The hot topic in U.K. higher education libraries is the publication of the Follett Report. This report, set up by joint funding councils for Higher Education (representing the four countries of the U.K.), set out to look at the state of libraries in Higher Education. The impetus behind the report was concern over the implications of recent growth in undergraduate student numbers ("pile 'em high, teach 'em cheap"). Other trends and issues necessitating the report include the funding of universities on their ratings and research records, the nature of universities since the Polytechnics became Universities virtually overnight, book and periodical prices, copyright issues, and the growing convergence of libraries and university computing services.

This is the first such big report since 1967 and has been well-received in most places. Universities are now getting their acts together in order to bid for some of the millions which are recommended for sharing out. The report contains forty-six or so specific recommendations in the following areas — information strategies, spending on libraries, performance indicators, staffing, purchasing, quality assessment, space management, the needs of researchers, copyright, networking, electronic documents, databases, training, and library management systems. This is a welcome recognition of some of the problems facing U.K. university libraries and provides hope that some will be addressed.

Note: See reports of some international meetings in And They Were There, this issue, page 27. ☞

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