clergy, lawyers, officers of state, medics, and scientists — are useful, because so specialized and not often collected together like this. The study of book collecting, both private and institutional, is another burgeoning field where a full bibliography is beyond the scope of the Handbook, although Pearson includes a section on directories from the late nineteenth century onwards.

The value of Pearson's book lies in part in the opportunities for scholarship it suggests. But at that point it begins to fall short of the otherwise high standards he sets. I would have liked a longer introductory essay, for example, on the study of provenance, and particularly its relationship to the history of the book — the wider context of the book trade, market forces, and changing taste. Pearson touches on it in his one-page introductory section and in the chapters on sale catalogues and private libraries; but this must be a subject he knows more about than he reveals here, and it would have given the book a nice balance between techniques and tools for investigation and the wider purpose of provenance research today. Indeed, much as the rigorousness of Pearson's work is to be admired, and up-to-date as it is in terms of where to go to investigate provenance and what to look out for, there is little sense of the new directions book studies have taken in recent years. There's little recognition of D.F. McKenzie's sociological approach. Ten years ago McKenzie was pointing out that theory limps behind practice, and, again, that mere lists never rise to readable history. Pearson's Handbook is more than mere lists, but it seems a pity when there are so few books about provenance that this one, in a History of the Book series, all but ignores this surely vital aspect of the current approach to the subject.

It is a measure of how far interest in provenance has moved in recent years that Pearson's original work, compiled in 1987, was then distributed on a self-published basis, whereas the 1994 version is, lavishly and expensively, published in the prestigious British Library Studies in the History of the Book series. Those original lists are here augmented by work on the tools essential to the study of provenance. But the broader context still needs to be explored. The move from research to application needs to be examined, and Pearson is clearly the person to take it on, placing provenance within the history of the book.

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These two quite disparate books have one thing in common: Oak Knoll Books, which is the publisher of the first and the distributor of the second. Oak Knoll Books was founded by Robert Fleck in the early 1970s and quickly established itself as one of the leading antiquarian firms specializing in books about books and bibliography. The first twenty-one Oak Knoll catalogues were issued from Newark, Delaware, and the prodigious series continued from New Castle, a charming colonial town near Wilmington, where Fleck established a large antiquarian book shop. Fleck is now up to catalogue 175, and there is probably another one in the mail as I write. Early on Oak Knoll catalogues included new books, providing a valuable service for collectors and historians of the book as many books in this field are published by small presses and specialized publishers and are not available in ordinary book stores. It was then a natural step into the realm of publishing and distribution. In 1978, for instance, Oak Knoll was the co-publisher of a reprint of Bigmore and Wyman’s *A Bibliography of Printing* and continued to re-issue standard works in the field. Many antiquarian booksellers become publishers, but few on the scale of Oak Knoll. Its winter 1995 catalogue lists well over one hundred titles, including those distributed on behalf of the American Antiquarian Society and W. Thomas Taylor.

A new edition of John Carter’s *ABC* is always welcome, especially one revised with corrections and additions. First published in 1952, the *ABC* immediately became a standard text, recommended to both novices and experts for its precise definitions and witty, erudite, and sometimes quirky, commentary. Forty-three years later it is not surprising that it retains those characteristics, although it also now exhibits a certain historical mustiness.

First the additions. There are twenty-one new articles in *ABC* 7, ranging from ‘bands,’ a binders’ term covered in previous editions under ‘raised bands’ to ‘text block,’ designated by Nicolas Barker as ‘an ugly but useful term.’ Significantly, the article on ‘raised bands’ is retained in *ABC* 7, and, indeed, there seems to have been no deletion or substitution of articles, only additions. ‘ESTC’ and ‘ISTC’ are natural additions, the common designations for two large international bibliographical projects, as are ‘PBFA’ [Provincial Booksellers’ Fairs Association], also covered in the new article ‘fairs,’ and ‘PMM,’ the frequently cited acronym of the great 1967 exhibition catalogue [Printing and the Mind of Man]. The addition of ‘jacket,’ however, seems superfluous, as it merely refers the reader to ‘dust jacket,’ an article retained, with slight revisions, through all six previous editions.

Over the years I have made notes in various editions of the *ABC*, especially regarding what I considered to be desiderata [a term itself that might well be included] and one of them appears in *ABC* 7. The word ‘codicology’ is not well understood, even by those who use it frequently, and ‘the study of codices’ is clearly an unsatisfactory definition. My anticipation of a concise, witty definition was, however, dashed as ‘the study of all aspects of the manuscript book’ does not tell me much and the statement that ‘the word is fairly new, and there are several claimants for its invention’ is merely tantalizing. Who are these claimants? The word seems to have come into general use in the early 1970s, and a stab at a definition is taken by Glaister in the 1979 edition of *Glossary of the Book*. My disappointment was compounded by the sudden realization that there
is no entry for the word 'codex' either. My missing desiderata include 'sombre' [a seventeenth-century binding style for devotional books], 'de-accession,' a word I dislike as much as I suspect Nicolas Barker does, but one with which collectors and curators are very familiar, and 'Grolier Club' [I would expect to see 'Roxburghe Club' and perhaps some others as well].

The revisions vary from extensive ('auctions') to minor corrections. The article on 'colonial editions' corrects a Carter prejudice against bothering with them at all, but there are many curious omissions as well. *The Bibliography of American Literature*, commonly known as *BAL*, is listed under 'Blanck,' and, although it was originally closely connected to its original compiler Jacob Blanck, this designation is today not only old-fashioned but misleading. Surely Michael Winship, the editor of volumes seven to nine deserves some credit. The article 'facsimiles and fakes' retains (and has since 1952) a particularly irritating example of fake cloth bindings, Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*. Where did Carter dig this up? It does not appear in any of his own books on publishers' bindings nor in any other standard reference book or the Hoppé bibliography of Butler. The only possible source is Dr. Jacob Schwartz' *1110 Obscure Points*, published in 1931, where the supposed 'faked' binding is illustrated. In almost thirty years of collecting Butler, I have never seen such a binding and will not believe in it until I am shown one.

I am glad to possess *ABC 7* and wish the publisher well. I would strongly suggest, however, that *ABC 8* be thoroughly and properly revised.

The Caxton Club of Chicago became in 1895 the fifth book collecting club to be established in the United States, following Grolier (1884), Club of Odd Volumes (1887), Rowfant (1892), and Philobiblon (1893). All these clubs survive and flourish to this day. The proximity of the dates of foundation was not a coincidence: American business enjoyed unfettered opportunities in the late nineteenth century, great fortunes were made, and the acquisition of culture followed in their wake. Clubs of many kinds were formed, and those men (women would become members of some of these clubs only in the 1970s) interested in books naturally gravitated together. It is worth emphasizing that the membership of these clubs consisted of both those who possessed great collections and those primarily interested in producing beautiful books. In some ways the most enduring legacy of the clubs is the books they caused to be published.

*The Caxton Club* is a handsome volume, printed by R.R. Donnelley & Sons, a family with long and close connections to the club, its founder, who was born and learned to print in Canada, having become a member in 1895. It is limited to a thousand copies, a press run which would seem optimistic for many works of scholarship in 1995. This book is not, unfortunately, one of them. Perhaps it is unfair to expect an *histoire du livre* account of a club of collectors, but the author does attempt to relate its activities to the history of Chicago and particularly to the production of books in the mid-west. At best his comparisons are generalized to the point where meaning is obscured; at worst we are offered examples of the influence of William Morris which only reveal a complete misunderstanding of what that much misunderstood man was trying to accomplish.

This book is, however, a valuable record of the ups and downs of an organization which began with enthusiastic optimism, experienced a 'golden period,'
almost perished during the First World War, just managed to survive Prohibition, the Depression and another war, but emerged triumphantly to celebrate its centennial. Especially valuable is a bibliography of the Caxton Club's publications, which emphasizes Western exploration and the book arts. E. Gordon Duff's William Caxton (1905), A.W. Pollard's An Essay on Colophons (1905), and James Westfall Thompson's The Frankfort Bookfair (1911) are all books eagerly sought today, both for their texts and as examples of elegant book design. The book concludes with 'Biographies of 100 Caxtonians,' a useful source of information not available elsewhere.

One can only congratulate The Caxton Club on achieving its centenary and handsomely commemorating it in a permanent manner and wish Caxtonians success for their second century.

RICHARD LANDON

*Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto*