article on Christopher Isherwood is less about the representation of gay pulp fiction in the novel than Isherwood’s personal analysis of Hinduism. In “Transcendent Submission: Resistance to Oppression in Jay Greene’s Behind these Walls,” Nicholas Alexander Hayes gets inspiration from Michel Foucault’s Discipline and Punish and observes the different power relations and sexual dynamics between characters.

The last essay of the collection, written by Jeremy Fisher, is the only one on gay pulps produced outside the United States. Fisher underscores the overtly conservative and homophobic context of Australia in the 1970s while examining the conditions that facilitated the expansion of the gay pulp market in that country. Even though prints about homosexuality, including scientific reports, were systematically banned in Australia before 1969 and even though the book market was dependent on importations from the United States and primarily the United Kingdom, gay pulps and more generally gay novels were periodically published in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s, such as The Gay Way (1974), issued by Horwitz Script Publications. It would have been interesting to read additional scholarship on the production, dissemination, and reception of gay pulps in other cultural areas and countries.

All in all, 1960s Gay Pulp Fiction is a remarkable work about a subject that has been long neglected by academics. Well written and precise, this collection will surely be useful to scholars specializing in queer history and to those interested in popular culture. If there is one thing to remember about this book, it is that the Stonewall riots were not the starting point for gay literature and publishing history. In fact, before those events, there was a varied and lively gay literature, still mostly unknown to this day. As book historians, it is now our task to unveil it.

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The American Antiquarian Society was founded in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1812 on the belief that “the collection & preservation of the Antiquities of our Country … have a tendency to enlarge
the sphere of human Knowledge, aid the progress of Science, to perpetuate the history of moral & political events, and to improve and interest posterity” (1). For more than two centuries, the Society and its librarians and curators have worked with determined energy to make America more aware of itself and its history through collecting and providing access to the printed and visual record of the United States and, to greater or lesser degrees, Canada, Central America, and the Caribbean from the earliest points of European settlement to 1876. The importance of the Society to American scholarship was visibly demonstrated by the awarding of the 2013 National Humanities Medal to the Society by Barack Obama for protecting the American story. This puts the Society in the same league as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Papers of George Washington project at the University of Virginia, and intellectual and cultural icons like Robert Caro, Joan Didion, Natalie Zemon Davis, and E.L. Doctorow.

Despite some initial confusion as to why individuals with antiquarian interest should join an organization in Worcester when a perfectly good historical society for the whole of Massachusetts had been in existence in Boston since 1791, the Society made clear its desire to collect more than just materials of local interest, but those that would be of use to scholars resident in “all parts of this quarter of the globe” (27). This was a far more ambitious mandate than that of any historical society yet created in the young country. It was further noted (without irony) that Worcester was a much safer location for important historical documents than Boston, which, like most New England urban centres, was prone to conflagrations and occasional invasions by British troops. The creation of the Society also took place during a period in which Americans were taking stock of their country’s history, but within the context of expansion, settlement, and a growing sense of America’s place in the world. The New-York Historical Society was founded in 1804, the same year that Lewis and Clark departed St. Louis, while the American Antiquarian Society came into being through Massachusetts statute four months after America and Britain went to war and four months after the creation of the Missouri Territory.

This handsome title was published to mark the Society’s bicentennial, and its author, a distinguished scholar of American literature and culture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has written a lively, engaging, and comprehensive record of the Society’s history and achievements. Philip Gura describes the challenges and opportunities faced by each of the librarians and
presidents from the establishment of the Society to the present, as well as the story of important collecting achievements. At the heart of the Society is its collection. Early gifts included those received in the first years of the Society’s existence from its founder and guiding spirit, Isaiah Thomas, a Worcester printer, and Hannah Mather Crocker’s donation of her grandfather Cotton Mather’s library. These were supplemented by materials from the amazingly varied collection of Thomas Wallcut, as well as documents received on exchange from other scholarly groups, including the American Colonization Society, which attempted to repatriate freed slaves to what became Liberia, and the Boston Athenaeum. Two hundred years later, the Society boasts a library of immense variety and depth, including manuscripts, graphic arts, ephemera, an invaluable collection of newspapers, and children’s material. The Society’s early history and development is fascinating, but Gura pays equal attention to recent periods of development, particularly the tenures of Marcus McCorison, librarian and later president, and Ellen S. Dunlap, the incumbent president. McCorison, a rare book man of the old school and referred to as the “Grand Acquisitor,” made the Society into a research institute of national significance during his quarter century at the Society starting in 1967, while Dunlap has in recent years devoted much energy and resources into increasing access to the Society’s digital collections.

This is the story of a great collection and the men who helped build it (women were not admitted to the membership of the Society until 1960 although the first woman to use the collection did so in 1888), but also the story of how the Society navigated the Scylla and Charybdis of budgets and space. As well, Gura shows how through scholarly publishing, lectures, microfilming, digitization, educational programs, and fellowships, the Society has attempted to make its collections better known and more accessible to researchers. The book has a self-congratulatory tone in parts, but this is undoubtedly justified given everything the Society has achieved since it was imagined by Isaiah Thomas two hundred years ago. A volume like this, which is well illustrated, but sadly only in black and white, will appeal not only to library historians and to historians of collecting, but also to those interested in American intellectual history and the history of antiquarianism.

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