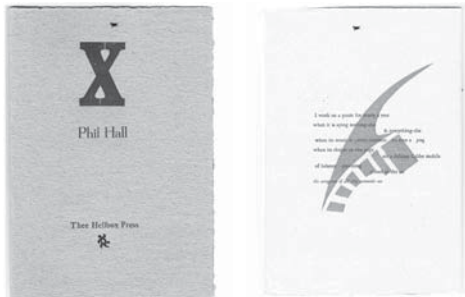


McConnell's painting *The Speaker's Chair*, and the typeface is Dante, set by hand. The papers are Arches Text, Matsuo Kozo and Saint-Armand Canal, with the presswork and binding done in-house at Running the Goat Press. 8 × 7 inches, 44 pp. Printed in an edition of 350 copies. \$35.

THEE HELLBOX PRESS

theehellbox.wordpress.com

Thee Hellbox Press is the private press of book artist Hugh Walter Barclay, who started out with a hellbox of worn and broken type in 1981 and now runs the press from his studio in Kingston, Ontario.



Phil Hall (with prints by Michèle LaRose), *X: A Poem in 16 Parts*

X is 16 pages printed letterpress with hand-set 14-point Garamond Roman and Italic on Saint-Armand acid-free text-weight Canal paper. The cover uses a Saint-Armand flax Canal paper and is stitch-bound. As with most publications from Thee Hellbox Press, the book is a joyful collaboration between author, artist and printer. Printed in an edition of 99 copies. \$40.

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 ~ Publishers keen to inform *Amphora* readers of forthcoming or recent publications (within the past three months) may contact columnist Richard Coxford, proprietor of Bytown Books in Ottawa, at bytownbookshop@rogers.com.

Seeds of Inspiration



FOR ALL OF THE personalized touches and attention to detail of the elaborate illustration in this stunning bookplate, little is known about its owner, J. Harry Smith. We do know that Smith was likely a press representative, and later the press manager, for the Canadian Pacific Railway, retiring in 1945.

In addition to writing *The Canadian Pacific: A National Institution*, a short history of the CPR delivered as an address on the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 1935, Smith also appears to have authored a travel book entitled *Newfoundland Holiday* (1952), “describing a trip from Port aux Basques to St. John’s by train, automobile, boat and on foot.”

We know more about the artist, the well-known Toronto engraver William Walker Alexander (1870–1948), whose initials appear in the lower right corner of the image. As a young artist, Alexander studied in the atelier of George A. Reid in Ontario, at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and under the direction of the

American painter Thomas Eakins. Alexander then distinguished himself as an etcher and bookplate maker in his brother's firm, the Alexander & Cable Lithographing Co. of Toronto.

Among other memberships and affiliations, Alexander was a founding member of the Toronto Art Students' League, co-founder of the Society of Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers, and a founding member of the Mahlstick Club. He was also active in the Toronto Canoe Club in 1904 and was among the first artists to sketch in Algonquin Park during his canoe trips.

In his 1919 book, *A List of Canadian Bookplates: With a Review of the History of Ex Libris in the Dominion*, Winward Prescott credits Alexander and his contemporaries, including A.H. Howard and Stanley Harrod, with turning "to the new ideas of the Bookplate." He describes Alexander as "empathetically an heraldic rather than a pictorial designer" (though Alexander seems to have turned more toward pictorial subject matter later in this career), declaring that "[i]n his armorial Ex Libris, he has broken away from the traditional die-sinker style and has followed the older and more correct models."

Prescott further proclaims that "[t]he plate by W.W. Alexander for Lady Eaton is in my opinion one of the most perfect examples of artistic excellence in Bookplate work." And in *Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development* (1943), William Colgate describes Alexander's works as "sympathetic, flexible and imbued with the spirit of confident craftsmanship."

It seems Smith and Alexander might have shared a number of connections. Smith was a one-time executive committee member of the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto, of which Alexander became a charter member in 1908. In addition, Smith also enjoyed canoeing in Algonquin Park.

"September in Algonquin Park," an article written by Smith that appeared in a 1911 issue of *The Canadian* magazine, recounts a two-week trip into the "Algonquin wilds." Though not an artist himself, Smith describes the landscape with a painterly eye: "The Canadian North is a country of strong colour and rugged line."

However Smith and Alexander became connected, their acquaintance produced an achievement in pictorial bookplate artistry.

The central image is a farm labourer sowing seeds across bucolic pasturelands. One can see a charming farmhouse, outbuilding and barn in the distant valley below. The image is almost certainly based on Sir W. "Hamo" Thornycroft's famous sculpture *The Sower* (1886), which was also the model for the logo of the British and Foreign Bible Society and its international affiliates for many years; it was placed on permanent display in Kew Gardens, in London, England, in 1922.

The Sower references the famous parable in Matthew's gospel, in which Jesus compares the dissemination of the Christian message and people's response to the sowing of seeds on different kinds of ground. Whatever the religious leanings of Smith, it's an apt image for someone who made a career of working with the press.

The bookplate's foreground is dominated on the left by a lamb, frolicking near an open copy of *Lamb's Tales*, which may be a reference to *Tales from Shakespeare*, written by Charles and Mary Lamb in 1807. Beneath the open volume appears a manuscript dated 1942 in the lower left corner, upon which rests an inkwell and a quill pen.

To the right of *Lamb's Tales* appears a mailbox labelled with Smith's name and "Knoll Farm," one assumes the bookplate owner's residence. If Knoll Farm resembled in any way the idyllic setting portrayed in this enchanting bookplate, Mr. Smith was a lucky man, indeed.

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~ Chelsea Shriver is in her third year of the dual Master of Library & Information Studies and Master of Archival Studies program at the iSchool at the University of British Columbia and is currently completing a co-op work term at Rare Books and Special Collections.

The latter's Bookplate Collection can be accessed from the UBC Library Digital Collections and Services site, <http://digitalcollections.library.ubc.ca>.