



THE CHAUCER NEWSLETTER

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The Manual

In 1916 the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences published *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English* by John Edwin Wells, who in his preface announced his purpose "to treat all the extant writings in print, from single lines to the most extensive pieces composed in English between 1050 and 1400." So valuable did the book become to students and scholars of Middle English literature that it went through four printings in ten years and ultimately continued its coverage into the 1940's with nine supplements. However, it is the fate of successful bibliographies to commit suicide by stimulating the response which puts them out-of-date. By the mid-1950's the MLA Middle English hierarchy had begun to hear growing complaints about the Wells—not only because its 1400 cut-off implied a poor-relation status for the fifteenth century, but also because juggling (and even finding) the supplements had become a problem. As a result, in the spring of 1955 an ad hoc Wells-revision committee met in the apartment of Lillian Herlands Hornstein (she had written expressing her concern with the problem).¹ Its guiding spirit, according to Professor Hornstein, was Roger Sherman Loomis. Its purpose was to set in motion compilation of a new *Manual*, one that included the fifteenth century. The separate chapters of the old Wells, as well as the new chapters necessitated by fifteenth-century coverage, were to be compiled by separate editors, and the whole project was to be under the direction of a general editor. To this position the committee appointed my predecessor, J. Burke Severs. The original conception was that the proposed revision was to be completed in two volumes—the first a series of bibliographies, to be followed by a corresponding second volume of commentary. The treatment was to tend toward the comprehensive rather than the selective. When it was discovered what being comprehensive entailed, the concept of a two-volume *Manual* at once evaporated. The first chapter, the Romances, comprised of 338 pages of commentary and bibliography together, became the first volume.

There were, of course, problems from the beginning which have not changed their shape very much over the years. Getting the copy from the editors was the main one. Not untypical was the chapter editor who wrote Professor Severs just before Christmas in 1959:

Dear Burke—I am typing bibliography copy in the hope that I can have it ready for mailing by the time classes resume after the Christmas recess. . . .

The writer of this letter, when he passed away more than fifteen years later, had still not sent in his copy. Professor Loomis, who had experienced similar problems with *ALMA*, was moved to write:

Dear Burke—I must apologize for writing with asperity about the situation regarding the new Wells. . . . I think it is shocking that so many of your contributors have been so slack. My only advice is to badger the slackers by personal appeals, and even [and here Professor Loomis continues more darkly] by raising the question of honor if necessary. . . . Sincerely yours, Roger.

I am not aware, however, that anyone's honor was ever impugned.

On the other hand, most chapter editors were not slackers. Indeed, some who met their deadlines meticulously had to sit and wait while their copy steadily grew older and more out-of-date. Victimized by their virtue, some of them passed their time by publishing definitive monographs on their chapter subjects; others, year by year, sent in revisions and additions until their chapters were published (one over a twelve-year stretch).² Their good temper and Griselda-like patience in the face of unconscionable delay are worthy of grateful mention.

In spite of the delays, however, and the resulting stateliness of its pace of publication, the *Manual* has presently achieved seven volumes (2595 pages) and must be considered a weighty presence in the field, as the list of

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Chaucer in Lotus-Land: Vancouver '88

Vancouver is a major city uniquely situated on the edge of a scenic wilderness. It combines the best of urban pleasures with the opportunity to explore or merely revel in some of the most spectacular scenery in North America. Vancouverites can enjoy sailing or downhill skiing a mere half hour's drive from downtown, and can fish for salmon in season on the Capilano River only ten minutes from the city center. It is an ideal setting for NCS members to combine business with holiday enjoyment.

Vancouver lies between three bodies of water: to the west Georgia Strait, which divides the mainland from Vancouver Island; to the north Burrard Inlet, a major international harbour; and to the south the Fraser River, separating Vancouver from Richmond, where the airport is situated. The University of British Columbia campus is at the western end of the city on a scenic peninsula jutting into the sea. At the eastern end Vancouver merges into Burnaby, where a second university, Simon Fraser, is situated. The city has excellent public transportation which includes buses, a monorail (the SkyTrain), and ferry service across Burrard Inlet to the north shore (the SeaBus). Transit information can be obtained by phoning 261-5100 and giving your starting point and destination. Unfortunately the same efficient service does not exist between the airport and UBC; NCS members will have to take the chartered buses or cabs to the UBC Gage Conference Centre. But the airport bus will take you directly downtown if you are staying at a hotel.

Vancouver has three civic theaters, centrally located in the downtown area: the Orpheum (home of the symphony orchestra), the Queen Elizabeth Playhouse, and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre. Most of the large touring companies play Vancouver during the summer; last year's presentations included the Kirov Ballet and the New York/Toronto production of *Cats*. There are also many smaller theaters, including the Arts Club

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Vancouver '88

Theatre on Granville Island, specializing in dinner theater and light entertainment, and UBC's Frederic Wood Theatre on campus. In conjunction with the UBC School of Music, the Vancouver Society for Early Music presents an annual festival from mid-July to mid-August with world-renowned artists in workshops and public concerts. This summer it will begin with Baroque and Renaissance programs, followed by a medieval program (including the "Sequentia") coinciding with the NCS meeting. The Thursday *Vancouver Sun* always lists current cultural events and special attractions in "What's On"; a more complete listing, which includes restaurants, shopping, and local places of interest, in addition to current events, can be found in the monthly *Key to Vancouver*, available in hotels and at the UBC Conference Centre, and in the weekly *Plus*, available in drugstores, supermarkets, etc.

Of particular interest to NCS members, since it will coincide with our congress, is the meeting of the International Summer Institute for Semiotic and Structural Studies (*ISIS*) being held at UBC from August 2-17. The Institute offers non-credit and credit courses; Mieke Bal and Gayatri Spivak are among this year's guest speakers. Three weekend colloquia are available on a drop-in basis at minimal cost: the colloquium for August 5-7 is entitled "The Semiotics of Representation." For information write Lorraine Weir, Program in Comparative Literature, UBC, 1866 Main Mall, Vancouver V6T 1W5.

Through Chaucerians will find few "olde bokes" in Vancouver (whose history barely reaches back to the eighteen hundreds), they will find rich remains of the aboriginal Indian culture upon whose carved masks Levi-Strauss based some of his important research. The UBC Museum of Anthropology (in front of which we will hold our salmon roast), a magnificent building designed by award-winning architect Arthur Erickson, contains totems, feast bowls, carvings in silver and copper, and massive sculptures by the contemporary Haida artist Bill Reid. Several downtown galleries and shops present good selections of reproductions, e.g., the Indian Gallery at 456 West Cordova and the Inuit Gallery at 345 Water Street, both in the oldest part of the city known as Gastown. Devotees of Chaucer's Franklin may want to try the excellent Northwest Coast Indian food at the Quilicum Restaurant, 1724 Davie Street,

(681-7044).

Indian culture can also be memorably experienced through the paintings of Emily Carr (1871-1945) in the Vancouver Art Gallery, on Georgia Street (a number 10 bus from UBC will take you there; hours are Tuesday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.). The building was once Vancouver's courthouse; the new courthouse, another intriguing Erickson design, is in the next block. Born in Victoria, Emily Carr travelled along the coast of Vancouver Island north to the Queen Charlottes, recording on canvas Indian villages and totems before they decayed and were lost. Her later works evoke the growth and space of the rain forests. She was also a writer: *Growing Pains* (her autobiography) and *Klee Wyck* are available in the Gallery Shop.

Visitors interested in seeing Vancouver through the eyes of its writers might also like to read *Swamp Angel* or *The Innocent Traveller* by Ethel Wilson; *Intertidal Life* by Audrey Thomas; or *Vancouver Short Stories*, edited by Carole Gerson. Earl Birney, Chaucer scholar at UBC in the fifties, wrote poetry with a Vancouver setting. Malcolm Lowry composed *Under the Volcano* while living in a shack in Dollarton on the North Shore; a memorial was placed in Cates Park during a Lowry conference held recently at UBC. Books by Canadian writers are available at the excellent UBC Bookstore and at Duthie Books at 4444 West 10th (near the campus), and 919 Robson Street (close to the Art Gallery); Ashley's at 3712 West 10th specializes in better used books.

The downtown area of Vancouver offers many opportunities for dining, shopping, and enjoying the scenery. Robson Street has specialty shops and restaurants with an international flavor, and a public market with a glass-house inspired by London's Crystal Palace. If you walk north on Granville toward the mountains and turn right onto Hastings Street you will reach the Sears Tower; from the revolving restaurant at the top you get a panoramic view of the city and surroundings. North of the Tower, on the harbor front, is the striking Canada Place Conference Centre built for Expo 86 which looks like a ship at full sail. The lounge of the neighboring Pan Pacific Hotel is a fine place to enjoy a view of the harbor and north shore mountains, and also serves a good Sunday brunch (reservations advised).

South of Hastings Street on Pender and

Keefe is North America's second largest Chinatown (after San Francisco). It features early Vancouver architecture, restaurants, and specialty shops. Behind the Chinese Cultural Centre is the impressive Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Garden, an authentic Chinese classical garden "with hye walled embattled." It has a scholar's pavilion, pools, tiled walks, and charming vistas framed by fretted windows. Vancouver is a botanist's and poet's delight. In addition to UBC's botanical and Japanese gardens, there are the Van Dusen Botanical Gardens (which advertise "a medieval maze") and the Bloedel Floral Conservatory, a tri-rotic glass dome containing plants and free-flying tropical birds "of every kynde that men thynke may."

Vancouver is an ideal place for a family holiday, and August is normally our sunniest month. Stanley Park, a few blocks from downtown at the western end of Georgia Street, is a thousand-acre wilderness bounded by a walkable (or jogable) seawall and excellent sandy beaches on English Bay (Jericho Beach, closer to UBC, is another fine area for children). Stanley Park also contains a zoo, a world-class aquarium with killer whales, a miniature railway, tennis courts, and restaurants. Another good day-trip with children might start at the Maritime Museum (at the foot of Chestnut Street on English Bay); guided tours are available over the *St. Roch*, the first vessel to navigate the Northwest passage in both directions. You can take a water taxi from the wharf in front of the museum to Granville Island in False Creek, a center of major urban renewal. Granville Island has a thriving public market, renovated warehouses transformed into theaters, restaurants, and galleries, and an entire building devoted to the needs of children (Kids' Only Market). Behind this is an outdoor water park (bring swimsuits). Children will also enjoy visits to the Arts, Sciences, and Technology Centre—hands-on technology and live demonstrations "of science and of lyght," and to the Planetarium, next to the Maritime Museum.

There are many day trips from Vancouver by car or bus. You can take a number 10 bus from UBC to the Kootenay Loop; transfer to a 135 (SFU) which will take you to the campus of Simon Fraser University on the top of Burnaby Mountain. Designed by Erickson and completed in 1966, the mile-long building looks out on spectacular views of the north shore mountains, Burrard Inlet, and Indian

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published chapters with their editors shows: I. Romances (M.J. Donovan, C.W. Dunn, L.H. Hornstein, R.M. Lumiansky, H. Newstead, H.M. Smyser); II. The *Pearl* Poet (M.P. Hamilton); III. Wyclif and His Followers (E.W. Talbert, S.H. Thompson); IV. Translations and Paraphrases of the Bible and Commentaries (L. Muir); V. Saints' Legends (C. D'Evelyn, F.A. Foster); VI. Instructions for Religious (C. D'Evelyn); VII. Dialogues, Debates, and Catachisms (F.L. Utley); VIII. Thomas Hoccleve (W. Matthews); IX. Malory and Caxton (R.H. Wilson); X. Middle Scots Writers (F.H. Ridley); XI. The Chaucerian Apocrypha (R.H. Robbins); XII. Dramatic Pieces (A.J. Mill, S. Lindenbaum, F.L. Utley, B. Ward); XIII. Poems dealing with contemporary conditions (R.H. Robbins); XIV. Carols (R. Leighton Greene); XV. Ballads (D. Fowler); XVI. John Lydgate (A. Renoir, C.D. Benson); XVII. John Gower (J.H. Fisher, R. W. Hamm, P.G. Beidler, R.F. Yeager); XVIII. Piers Plowman (A. Middleton); XIX. Travel and Geographical Writings (C.K. Zacher); XX. Works of Re-

Arm. Free tours start from the administration building. The library houses Wordsworth first editions and modern and post-modern North American writers. However, choose a fine day for this trip, when the scenery isn't blotted out by fog!

If you tire of the bustle of Vancouver, you can take the ferry across Georgia Strait and spend a day in Victoria, the provincial capital and the home of B.C.'s third university, the University of Victoria. This trip is one of the Saturday tour options arranged by the NCS with Greyhound Coach Lines. Or you can make the trip by car, driving south to the ferry terminal at Tsawassan. Many visitors find the voyage through the Gulf Islands one of the highlights of their holiday. A prime attraction in Victoria is the Provincial Museum which contains another excellent collection of Indian masks and artifacts, including the replica of a traditional Long House.

Vacationers can request material in advance from Tourism B.C., Parliament Buildings, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8V 1X4, or pick them up at the UBC Conference Centre on arrival. See you in August.

Mary-Ann Stouck
Simon Fraser University

ligious and Philosophical Instruction (R.R. Raymo). The list constitutes an impressive roll call of modern scholars of Middle English.

My work as general editor, which started with the Debates chapter by Francis Lee Utley, acquainted me in detail with the implications of the *Manual's* marked tendency toward fullness of treatment. Today I am still astonished when I look at Professor Utley's bibliography of the debates between the body and the soul, covering not only the Old and Middle English versions, but also the Scandinavian, Hungarian, French, Provençal, Catalan, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, German, Greek, Slavic, Classical, and Oriental traditions—a virtuoso performance requiring eighteen double-column pages of 8-point Baskerville. This same enlargement of the original subject, the same enhancement of its significance, has been characteristic of every chapter I have edited and will be of the chapters yet to come. It has often been instrumental in re-defining, reorganizing, and establishing new boundaries for the original concept. The differences between the fullness of coverage in the original Wells and the present *Manual* are instructive in this regard. To cite two instances (admittedly selected for their sensational effect, but still typical), the Wells chapter on Works of Religious Instruction included 52 titles. The recently published corresponding chapter in the *Manual* has 250, some of which are "compendium" titles (one cites separate works from 85 MSS). In the soon-to-be-published Chronicles chapter there are 113 titles. Wells listed 11. It is little wonder that the *Manual*, which in its earliest days looked to the Chaucer chapter as its main attraction, decided some years ago to eliminate the chapter. Let *them* worry about that. Of course, some of this expansion must be attributed to the new material that has inevitably come to light with the passage of time, and to the extension of treatment to the fifteenth century. But much of it must also be attributed to the remarkable learning, impressive industry, and aggressive thoroughness of the chapter editors themselves, and to the help of fellow scholars, here and abroad, not officially connected with the project, who have given freely of their knowledge so that the work may be as useful and current as possible. In this sense, the *Manual* truly incorporates the work of the scholarly community as a whole.

As future volumes of the *Manual* concern themselves with the less central areas of Mid-

dle English studies, they will increasingly provide this kind of treatment. With the expansion of the field, in part because these less central areas are finally beginning to receive their due, it became clear that the project could not be completed in ten volumes as expected. The three chapters being presently prepared for the press (Chronicles; Proverbs, Precepts, and Monitory Pieces; Mystical Writings) will appear as volumes 8 and 9. And there still remain the following chapters: Science and Information, Tales, Homilies, Lyrics, Letter Collections, and Undistributed Prose—all, with the possible exception of the Lyrics, will incorporate much new material, as a recent letter from the editor of the Science and Information chapter makes clear. Having given most of a summer in England to Charms, Glosses, and Cookery, he wrote, "Much of [this material] has been untouched for a century. No one should be allowed to do another dissertation on Chaucer until some of this work is done—and done right." Every indication is that each of these chapters will be substantial. How long will it take to complete the whole project? ("When are you going to get that thing finished?" has been the standard opening gambit in professional conversations with me over the years.) With caveats growing out of previous experience, I would hazard that it might be finally finished in four to five years.

When it is completed, I will take pleasure in seeing it in its finished form. But my particular pleasure, and one not granted to many, has been the opportunity to work for so many years with so many of the most capable scholars in our field. When, not long ago, I sent Burke Severs a copy of volume 7, warm from the press, he wrote congratulating me on "riding herd on the best that there is." I disclaim the "riding herd," but I have no doubt in my mind about "the best that there is."

Albert E. Hartung
Lehigh University

¹The names of those attending are lost in the mists of unrecorded history, but must have included the following, listed as the special Wells committee in the program for the MLA 1955 Annual Meeting in Chicago: B.J. Whiting, Roger S. Loomis, Rosell Hope Robbins, E. Talbot Donaldson, Hamilton M. Smyser.

²E.g., respectively, John H. Fisher (*John Gower: Moral Philosopher and Friend of Chaucer*, 1964); Robert H. Wilson (Chapter IX—Malory and Caxton).

The Chaucer Newsletter, distributed twice a year to members of The New Chaucer Society, is intended primarily as a vehicle for Society business. Its ephemeral character makes it an unsuitable repository for substantive articles, but it is happy to publish discussions of research in progress and other activities of interest to Chaucerians. Deadline for the Fall issue is 1 September; for the Spring issue, 1 January. Materials should be sent to the editor, John H. Fisher, Department of English, University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37996.

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