



THE OWL

WINTER/SPRING 2024

Two Women and a Sporting Book Collection

Most people have heard of Orvis, the fly-fishing and wing-shooting international retailer headquartered in southwestern Vermont. But are you familiar with Mary Orvis Marbury, author of the 1892 fly-fishing book *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*? Or Paulina Brandreth, who wrote *Trails of Enchantment* (1930) under the pseudonym Paul Brandreth? Both books are housed in our Rare Book Room as part of the Frederick Sprague Barbour Collection of hunting and fishing books.

The Barbour Collection was developed by Frederick K. Barbour (1894–1971), an avid sportsman. Barbour and his wife Helen Carrère Barbour were summer residents of Norfolk, having been first invited here by Helen's cousins, Reginald and Beatrice Carrère Rowland. Like many of the early summer residents, Reg Rowland and Fred Barbour were attracted to Norfolk for its excellent hunting and fishing opportunities. In addition to upland birds and deer, the many streams and lakes were filled with trout, perch, pickerel, and bass.

The Barbours' son Frederick Sprague Barbour (1927–1952) was a second lieutenant in the Field Artillery at West Point during the Korean War, when he died of bulbar polio in 1952. His interest in hunting inspired the bequest of the Barbour Collection in his memory. Among the many first editions in the collection, those by Mary Orvis Marbury and Paulina Brandreth stand out. Both Marbury and Brandreth were influential women in their respective sports of fly fishing and deer hunting, and their landmark books are still in print today.

Mary Ellen Orvis Marbury (1856–1914) was born in Manchester, Vermont, the oldest child and only daughter of Charles F. Orvis. In 1856, the year of her birth, her father founded the C. F. Orvis Company, now known as the Orvis Company, and established a shop selling fly-fishing rods and flies made by the company.

Marbury graduated from the local high school in 1872. Shortly thereafter she expressed an interest in fly tying, so Orvis brought New York City flytier John Hailey to Vermont to give tying instruction. As a student Marbury did well, and in 1876 she became the manager of the company's fly-tying operations. That same year she won first prize for an exhibit of flies at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.



A trout fly plate that served as a model for the chromolithograph in Marbury's book (Collection of the American Museum of Fly Fishing).

Marbury hired local women and trained them using patterns that were based on British styles, slightly changed to suit angling in this country. By 1890, the company was tying and selling more than 400 different fly patterns. In order to create a fly-pattern standard for fishing in North America, Marbury compiled a list of patterns used in different regions of the country and created a book that would set the standard for name and pattern according to location. The landmark *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* was published in 1892. By 1896, there had been nine printings.

The full title of the book is descriptive: *Favorite Flies and Their Histories. With many replies from practical anglers to inquiries concerning how, when and where to use them. Illustrated by Thirty-two colored plates of flies, six engravings of natural insects and eight reproductions of photographs.* 291 patterns from Canada, thirty-six states, and two territories (Arizona and Utah) are included. To complement the book and to represent the C. F. Orvis Company at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Marbury assembled hinged fly panels to exhibit. These panels would one day become the inspiration for the founding of the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont. For her work on *Favorite Flies and Their Histories*, Marbury is lauded as one of the most influential women in the sport of fly fishing.

Equally notable was Paulina Brandreth (1885–1946), an accomplished photographer, hunter, naturalist, and writer.
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STATE GRANTS-IN-AID are a vital part of the annual budget for many public libraries.

This year, in order to be eligible for state grants, Connecticut

libraries were required to submit their Collections Development Policies for review by the Connecticut State Library Division of Library Development.

This was to ensure that those libraries adhered to the statutory requirements of Senate Bill 2 Public Act 23-101 "An Act Concerning the mental, physical, and emotional wellness of children," as modified effective July 1, 2023.

Among those requirements: "Principal public libraries shall provide equal access to library services for all individuals and shall not discriminate upon the basis of age, race, sex, gender identity or expression, religion, national origin, handicap or place of residency in the town in which the library is located." The importance of a robust Collections Development Policy is to protect equal access to material in

the face of ongoing book challenges. Our Collections Development Policy begins with a mission statement:

"The Norfolk Library is a free, non-sectarian public library whose mission is to enable learning and literacy, promote culture through the arts, and encourage the sharing of ideas. The Collection Development Policy of the Norfolk Library provides guidance, within budgetary and space limitations, for the growth and development of a useful collection of materials for the information, enrichment, and entertainment of its users. Every effort will be made to provide the community with a collection that reflects a wide range of views, opinions, and interests; that increases social awareness; and that encourages the free expression of ideas that is essential to an informed citizenry."

The development of the collection is based on the principles of intellectual freedom adopted by the American Library Association as expressed in its Freedom to Read and Freedom to View statements and in its Library Bill of Rights. The Collections Development Policy can be

found on the library website along with links to the ALA statements.

The Norfolk Library is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. We recognize and embrace the strengths of our differences and celebrate the diversity of viewpoints that make up our global community. We strive to develop a collection that is reflective of these ideals. Thank you for your support.

—Ann Havemeyer

NORFOLK LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Upcoming Art Exhibits

OPENING RECEPTIONS ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

February Jennifer Almquist, *Photographs*

March Linda Filley, *Paper Shoes*

April Deborah Hanson Greene, *Watercolors*

May Lisa Hamilton, *Paintings*

June Jeffrey Kay, *Photographs*



NORFOLK LIBRARY ASSOCIATES

The Associates is a group of dedicated volunteers who contribute their time and talents to support the Library. They organize monthly art exhibits and raise funds for the cultural programs offered by the Library. The group welcomes new members. Meetings are held in the Library the first Tuesday of the month at noon. Please join us!

Louise Davis, *Co-President*
Galene Kessin, *Co-President*
Elizabeth Scheel, *Vice-President*
Paul Madore, *Treasurer*

SAVE THE DATES!

A Festive Anniversary Party

Saturday, January 20, 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the kick-off of the Library Associates 50th Anniversary year! All are invited to a festive party in the Great Hall with the music of the Grantville Dawgs. Hors d'oeuvres, wine, and a signature cocktail will be served.

Music Among Neighbors

Saturday, January 27, 4:00 p.m.

Our next Music Among Neighbors performance features Andrew Thomson and Ken Storrs in a program of Scottish music and merriment. Feel free to wear your tartans!



George Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue

Saturday, February 10, 3:00 p.m.

Please join us for a program of Gershwin solo piano arrangements, performed by Paul Bisaccia. Included will be a little history, more humor, and many anecdotes that make the man come alive for an evening. Bisaccia is the first person to record all the solo piano music of Gershwin. The program will include lots of standards and favorites such as Swanee, 'S Wonderful, and I Got Rhythm as well as the seldom played original solo piano version of Rhapsody in Blue that Mr. Bisaccia played on his PBS television special "Gershwin by Bisaccia".

A Reading of Alabama Story

Sunday, February 25, 3:00 p.m.

We are pleased to present a reading of *Alabama Story*, playwright Kenneth Jones' six-actor drama about censorship, book banning, and Civil Rights. The play introduces the world to the little-known true story of a librarian named Emily Wheelock Reed, who was persecuted by politicians for protecting a children's picture book in the Jim Crow South. The *Washington Post* called it a play "of national relevance." The controversial and challenged children's book at the center of *Alabama Story* is "The Rabbits' Wedding," published in 1958, which depicts a black rabbit marrying a white rabbit. Politicians and citizens in Alabama wanted the book burned. The play is set in 1959, and freely mixes fact, fiction, humor, and drama. The play will be read by a group of Northwest Corner actors, directed by Macey G. Levin.

For details and registration, please visit our website.

Be sure to subscribe to our Night Owl e-newsletter. The sign-up can be found on the Library's homepage. Once subscribed, you'll receive the Night Owl in your inbox every Friday morning, complete with links to register for upcoming library programs.

St. Patrick's Day Concert: The Jeremiahs

Thursday, March 14, 7:00 p.m.

The Irish folk band The Jeremiahs will be performing at our traditional St. Patrick's Day concert featuring Irish music and fare. The band has travelled extensively and has been heralded as a live band not to be missed. With a wonderful mixture of newly-composed songs and tunes in the folk genre and a well-selected catalogue of older folk songs, they are sure to rouse all the emotions. Hailing from County Dublin is singer Joe Gibney on vocals. On fiddle and vocals is New York born Matt Mancuso. On flute from County Clare is Conor Crimmins, and on guitar is Dublin-born James Ryan. "Great songs, poignant, emotional vocals, masterful guitar and fiddle/flute conversations that work like fine embroidery – no wonder critics love them. You will too!" — Larry Groce, host of NPR Music's "Mountain Stage."

Puppet Show: My Night in the Planetarium

Saturday, March 23, 3:00 p.m.

Best-selling children's book author Innosanto Nagara's true story of art and social protest comes to life as a dynamic pop-up puppet show. Created and performed by fellow artist/activist Tanya Nixon-Silberg, the show transports audiences to Jakarta in the 1970s, where 7-year-old Inno learns firsthand how a play has the power to spark a resistance movement. Featuring designs and puppets by Sarah Nolen, the story is brought to life with a rich soundscape, visual transformations, and kid-centered lessons about social justice. Recommended for ages 5 and up.

Mindfulness Series with Miranda Lee

Fridays via Zoom, 9:15–10:00 a.m.

Mindfulness practitioner Miranda Lee continues her classes this winter. Anyone can join at any time. Each month, Miranda will focus on a theme. See the world with fresh, new eyes in January. Learn to find moments of rest in February. Self-compassion, stress management, emotional intelligence, and mindfulness of nature are subsequent themes.

A SUMMER SOIRÉE

A FESTIVE COCKTAIL PARTY
UNDER THE TENT
AT THE NORFOLK LIBRARY

On the eve of the book sale, the Library Associates hosted a festive party under the tent, the first since the 2020 pandemic. Delectable hors d'oeuvres and drinks were served, including a signature cocktail, named after library founder Isabella Eldridge. Save the date for next year's Summer Soirée and Auction on Friday, August 23, celebrating the Associates 50th anniversary.



Book Sale Success

Now in its 46th year, the Library Associates' Annual Book Sale was truly a community-wide effort with over 90 volunteers. We are so grateful for everyone's help! Proceeds from the sale underwrite the Library's many free special events, films, concerts, book discussions, children's programs, and more.



Starting at 7 a.m., volunteers moved books from out of the basement.



Galene Kessin, co-president of the Associates, provided nourishment for the volunteers.



Cashiers Alyson Thomson and Caroline Andrus greeted buyers, who came from all over New England, New York, and New Jersey.



A job well done! Co-chair Bridget Taylor with book sale volunteers after the set up.



Trish Deans masterfully researched and priced the books of better value, with the help of Tara Nuño.



Paul Madore, treasurer of the Associates, and Tom Hlas, library trustee, managed the bookkeeping.



Co-chairs Bridget Taylor and Liz Hilpman helped load boxes of books for distribution by Discover Books.

Brandreth hunted and photographed deer on her family's 24,000-acre property in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. She often went afield with other well-known hunters of the day, including Roy Chapman Andrews, General "Black Jack" Pershing, and Reuben Cary. Andrews was an explorer and naturalist, who led a series of expeditions to the Gobi Desert and Mongolia in the 1920s. He would later serve as Director of the American Museum of Natural History, before retiring in 1942 to his home in Colebrook, where he wrote most of his popular autobiographical books. Two of his titles are in the Norfolk Library collection.

Brandreth began writing for the sportsmen's journal *Forest and Stream* in 1894 at the age of nine. Her material was credited to "Camp Good Enough, Brandreth Lake," which was a deer camp on land purchased by her grandfather for hunting and fishing. As an adult, Brandreth continued to write, using the pseudonym Paul Brandreth. A woman hunter of her era was a rarity; even more so was a woman writing about hunting. In a 2003 foreword to *Trails of Enchantment*, Robert Wegner writes, "Of the more than 2,000 books written on the subject of deer and deer hunting..., only five are written by women." By writing with a pseudonym, Brandreth was able to publish books on hunting, fishing,

conservation, and camping in the wild, as well as 31 articles in *Field and Stream* and *Forest and Stream* magazines.

Trails of Enchantment was published in 1930 by G. H. Watt, a New York-based publisher. A review in *Gray's Sporting Journal* noted the many "gems" in the book, especially the concluding chapter "The Spirit of the Primitive," described as "one of the finest essays on the wilderness ethos and should appear with Aldo Leopold."

Considered by many to be the father of wildlife ecology, Aldo Leopold was an ecologist, forester, and environmentalist, who wrote *A Sand County Almanac* in 1949. His Land Ethic essay was published as the finale to the book. It is a call for moral responsibility to the natural world. As described by the Aldo Leopold Foundation, a land ethic expands the definition of "community" to include not only humans, but all of the other parts of the Earth as well: soils, waters, plants, and animals. In this community, people care about people, about land, and about strengthening the relationships between them. In *Trails of Enchantment*, Brandreth wrote about the experience of communing with nature. The book is still considered one of the best ever written about whitetail deer.

—Ann Havemeyer

GREENWOODS PUPPET FESTIVAL



Our second Greenwood's Puppet Festival celebrating the art of puppetry took place on October 14. Three puppet shows were staged in the Library and Battell Chapel, followed by a magical puppet parade on the Village Green. Colorful large-scale puppets stopped traffic on Route 44, processing to the music of Felix Mendelssohn's setting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (how fitting that two of the puppets were Oberon and Titania). The inspiration of Eileen Fitzgibbons, the festival was a tremendous success, and we are very grateful for the support of the Battell Arts Foundation, the H. B. Henson Fund, and the Library Associates. Special thanks to costume and puppet designer Susan Aziz for her hospitality hosting the puppeteers and her organization of the puppet parade, and to our AV technician John DeShazo, who volunteers his time and expertise for so many library programs.



Meet or *Mate*? House or *Hoos*?

In 1781, a young Noah Webster took up residence in Sharon, CT, at the home of Cotton Mather Smith, pastor of the Sharon Congregational Church. Unable to find work as a lawyer, Webster opened a school in Sharon for “young gentlemen and ladies to be instructed in reading, writing, mathematics, and the English language.” Webster’s school was an instant success, but he was horrified with the poor quality of school textbooks in use. Although this was after the American Revolution, the textbooks came from England. Webster was a fervent patriot and believed that Americans should be learning from American textbooks rather than British. He also believed that the inconsistencies of English spelling presented obstacles to students both young and old. In 1783, he published *The American Spelling Book*, also known as the Blue-backed Speller. The book stayed in print for over 100 years and was the money maker that allowed Webster to devote the second half of his life to creating an American dictionary.

To write his dictionary, Webster relied on the most famous dictionary of his time: Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* that was published in England in 1755. The Norfolk Library has the 1785 edition of Johnson’s dictionary that belonged to Joseph Battell, the grandfather of Isabella Eldridge, founder of the Library. Webster’s copy of the 1799 edition of Johnson’s Dictionary, with his notes in the margins, is in the Rare Book Room of the New York Public Library.

Webster denounced Johnson for his support of the British during the American War of Independence and complained that Johnson’s Dictionary was “extremely imperfect and full of error.” However, Webster used approximately 30% of Johnson’s definitions in his dictionary. What he did not retain was Johnson’s spelling.

Webster’s spelling reforms were a move for American identity. He held strong convictions that a national language would unify the individual states: “Now is the time, and this the country... Let us then seize the present moment, and establish a national language, as well as a

national government.” A distinctive American language with its own spelling and pronunciation would help develop the cultural independence of the United States.

Other goals were simplicity and consistency. Johnson’s Dictionary had been the first to attempt to enforce a standard of spelling upon the inconsistent English language. Webster strove to further standardize spelling. Why was English so inconsistent in its spelling? We can blame the Great Vowel Shift, which took place from the 1400s to the 1700s. Vowels were spoken higher in the throat and closer to the lips, which changed the pronunciations. Before the vowel shift, “meet” was pronounced “mate,” “house” was pronounced “hoos,” and “wife” was pronounced “weef.” Words were printed for the first time even as they were changing in both sound and cultural context.

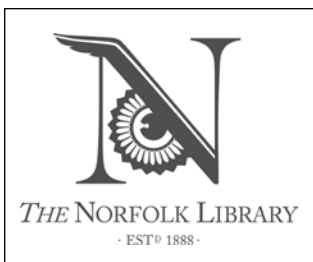
For example, consider the “ough” combination. There are at least ten pronunciations for this combination of letters, ranging from “cough” to “through” to “dough” to “bough.” Each of these pronunciations was standardized at a different time during the Great Vowel Shift, which results in the confusion that we have today.

Many of Webster’s changes became standard usage. He replaced “colour” with “color” (dropped the redundant u), “centre” with “center” and “realise” with “realize” (removed the French influence). Reasoning that many spelling conventions were artificial and needlessly confusing, he altered many words, such as “musick” to “music” and “plough” to “plow.”

An *American Dictionary of the English Language* was published in 1828. The dictionary contained 70,000 words of which 12,000 had never been in a published dictionary. 5,000 new words were products of life in America, such as skunk, squash, and chowder. The dictionary succeeded in standardizing spelling and creating an American version of English.

Webster is considered the father of American English. The house in Sharon where he started writing his dictionary entries still stands at the southern end of the Sharon green.

—Leslie Battis



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Sunday 1 pm–4 pm

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Heather Henson, the daughter of Muppets creator Jim Henson, was an enthusiastic participant in our puppet festival. We are grateful to Heather for awarding the Library a grant from the H. B. Henson Fund to support future puppet programming.