Foreword

It is a great honor to write a foreword for this volume commemorating the first fifty years of the Baltimore Bibliophiles. The passion for books that brought the founders together has been maintained by the group over these many years. Neither the changes in membership, the changes in book collecting, nor the changes in books themselves have diverted the group from "providing a focal point for community interest in matters pertaining to books and manuscripts and the collecting thereof, bookbindings, typography, printing, paper, calligraphy, prints and book illustration, maps, and aspects of the book arts such as bookbinding, book conservation, book design, and related fields," as the founding By-laws state so eloquently. Books have transcended the generations, and the Baltimore Bibliophiles have given focus to that transcendence over the last half century.

The existence of the group today is a tribute to the founders, and the history of the Baltimore Bibliophiles clearly reveals the consistent quality of the group's interest and enthusiasm for books. Over 300 speakers have addressed the group at its 325 meetings held over fifty years. Meetings have been held at such diverse locations as Johns Hopkins University's Evergreen House and Peabody Library, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and Goucher College. The Maryland Medical and Chirurgical Faculty ("Med Chi"), the Maryland Historical Society, and the Peale Museum historically were sites of meetings. Field trips were taken to such diverse places as the Baltimore *Sun,* Schneidereith and Sons printers, and National Archives II, the U.S. National Archives headquarters in College Park. The Free Library of Philadelphia, the Folger Shakespeare Library, and the Grolier Club were other locations that the group visited. In the early years, occasional auctions were held to raise funds for the group's activities. These occasions were no doubt spirited for the close knit and lively membership.

Change has especially characterized the Baltimore Bibliophiles in recent years, perhaps as a reflection of the changing nature of the marketplace and book collecting itself. The By-laws have become a Constitution and have been changed to accommodate more members and the non-profit status granted by the Internal Revenue Service.

Contributions to the group are now tax-deductible. Book collecting is conducted not only by the traditional means (that is, books found through networking among collectors and dealers and at live auctions), but also by electronic means. Online auctions are now an important source of collectible books, and collectors and dealers who never would have made contact in the past now buy, sell, and trade with each other over the World Wide Web. The geography of collecting has changed dramatically just as competition among dealers has increased, and the condition of books found online can vary tremendously, sometimes to the surprise of the recipient. E-mails and the Web rule collecting today more than ever.

Books themselves have changed in extraordinary ways in recent decades. Digital reproductions have become pervasive on the Web, and some believe they are replacing the need for originals. Walter Benjamin in his landmark essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," argued that the most perfect reproduction of a work of art lacks the "unique existence" of the original. His remarks were aimed at paintings, but he might well have been talking about books.[1] A digitally reproduced book just cannot replace an original and still possess the qualities that make it original—the materials used in its manufacture, the history to which it was subject, its changes in ownership, and the changes in physical condition it may have suffered, to name just a few. More than ever, books are among the physical remains of the human past. They transcend the generations of human knowledge and experience, and are one aspect of the idealized pattern of meanings, values, and norms shared by a society from which may be inferred the non-instinctive behavior called culture. In short, books are artifacts that help define cultures, and they are more valuable than ever for knowing and understanding past and present cultures.

Book collectors such as the Baltimore Bibliophiles play an important role in preserving and passing on our culture. This volume to a great extent charts the history of the Baltimore Bibliophiles, and is a record of their achievements.

TOM BECK, *President, Baltimore Bibliophiles, 2003-2005*

1. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt Brace & World, 1968), 217–228.

Preface

With this volume we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Baltimore Bibliophiles. In it we record the flourishing of bibliophily in Baltimore and the vigor of our organization. We print an original essay by Linda F. Lapides about early children's books in Baltimore and a catalogue of a selection of the Baltimore children's books that she and her husband, Julian L. Lapides, have collected. In a separate section, we present a historical record of our organization.

This book is the work of many hands. We acknowledge with thanks two long-standing and steadfast members who consented to being interviewed, James Bready, who joined the club in the year of its founding, and the late P. William Filby. We thank Linda and Jack Lapides for their constant support of all aspects of this publication and for providing in their collection and collecting the focus of the first part of the book. Linda Lapides we thank for her essay and for the catalogue of a selection of the Baltimore imprints from the marvelous Lapides Collection.

Other persons whose contributions made possible the publication of this volume are:

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Finally, we acknowledge the faithful advice and counsel of the successive members of the executive committee who served while this book was underway and especially Nancy Magnuson, under whose presidency the book was conceived, Joe Jensen, who kept the idea of a commemorative volume moving forward, and Tom Beck, who contributed the foreword of the book.

Coordinating these joint efforts, all so willingly contributed, was for the editors a gratifying experience. Each editor cannot imagine another such who could have been a better coadjutor.

DONALD FARREN and AUGUST A. IMHOLTZ, JR.