

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document:

**SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE IN AMERICA:  
THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE FOLGER  
ELIZABETHAN THEATRE**

**Elizabeth Forte Alman, Doctor of Philosophy,  
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The Folger Shakespeare Library, a private research institution located in Washington, D.C., was founded by Henry and Emily Folger in 1932. The Folgers intended their memorial to William Shakespeare, a complex that includes a library, an exhibition hall and an Elizabethan-styled theatre, to promote research and the communication of that research to the citizenry. This study suggests the Folgers, influenced by the Elizabethan Revival movement, envisioned the Folger Elizabethan Theatre to be utilized as an important tool to extend the research function of the institution, a laboratory, of sorts, to further the type of performance research that William Poel, Nugent Monk, Harley Granville Barker, B. Iden Payne, and Ben Greet conducted in early modern production practices. Interestingly, however, performance research was not included as one of the Library's activities at its founding.

The author identifies and examines a number of myths of origin about Henry and Emily Folger, the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Folger Elizabethan

Theatre, suggesting their promotion by Library officials and others has helped to obscure the Founders' original intent for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Drawing on archival research this study attempts to re-contextualize the early history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre with that of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

SHAKESPEARE'S STAGE IN AMERICA: THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE  
FOLGER ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

By

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## Introduction

O. B. Hardison Jr. (1928-1990), Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library from 1969 to 1984, considered the founding of the Folger Theatre Group in 1970 at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre as the private research institution's singularly most important public program.<sup>1</sup> The Library's founders, Henry and Emily Folger (who bequeathed the Library to be administered by the Trustees of Amherst College, Henry Folger's alma mater), included the Elizabethan-styled theatre in their Library project located in Washington, D.C. for the study of Shakespeare in performance.<sup>2</sup> This theatrical activity was meant to complement the studying of Shakespeare as a literary and historical topic by advanced scholars in the Library's Gail Kern Paster Reading Room.<sup>3</sup> Shakespearean scholar W. B. Worthen helps to illuminate the difference between (and, for Worthen, the benefits of) considering Shakespeare from a performance perspective – versus solely a literary one in his 1997 *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*:

In a schematic sense, a literary perspective takes the authority of a performance to be a function of how fully the stage expresses meanings, gestures, and themes located ineffably in the written work, the source of the performance and the measure of its success. Though performance may discover nuance and meaning not immediately available through reading or criticism, these meanings are nonetheless

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<sup>1</sup> Jed I Bergman with William G. Bowen and Thomas I. Nygren, *Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector: Lessons from the Evolution of Five Independent Research Libraries*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); 80.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter Three focuses on the Folger's intent to found a public program of performance in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

<sup>3</sup> This subject is discussed at length in Chapter Three.

seen as latent potentialities of the words on the page. From the performative perspective, stage production is, in a sense, the final cause for the writing of plays, which are fully realized only in the circumstances for which they were originally intended: theatrical performance.<sup>4</sup>

Including the Folger Elizabethan Theatre within the Library suggests the Folgers desired to influence the way Shakespeare's plays were staged, not just how they were studied. Yet, investigating the history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre before Director Hardison's 1969 appointment reveals a number of striking dichotomies:

- 1.) The Library's founders, Henry Clay Folger and Emily Clara Jordan Folger, specified the inclusion of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in their remarkable overall vision for the Folger Shakespeare Library. No written history exists, however, suggesting how the inception of the unique-styled Theatre came to be included in the founders' plan, particularly how their engagement with activities associated with the Elizabethan Revival movement may have influenced their decision to include the Theatre within the Library building.
- 2.) Though the Theatre holds the distinction of being the first permanent Elizabethan-style theatre built in the United States, Library officials continue to overlook the Theatre's architectural significance – even though the Theatre is an essential artifact of the Elizabethan Revival movement.

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<sup>4</sup> W. B. Worthen, *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance*, (New York; Cambridge University Press, 1997); 4.

3.) The Theatre was originally conceived and built for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays in original practices productions, again a product of the Elizabethan Revival movement. Yet, before 1968 the Theatre had only hosted a single full production of a play since the Library's founding in 1932.

These observations logically lead to a central question: when, how and why did this disconnect occur between what the founders envisioned for their Library project and what actually materialized?

Examining these dichotomies, their origins and why some persist is prudent in light of continued interest in how the Folgers' Library project developed, as evidenced by topical discussions in a number of recent publications.<sup>5</sup> In addition, in 2014 the Johns Hopkins University Press will release historian Stephen Grant's biography of Henry and Emily Folger: the first of its kind, representing a further sign of the sustaining appeal of the Folgers' story. Furthermore, exploring these dichotomies provides an opportunity to examine the Library's specific struggle with the "American conception of Shakespeare's rightful place:" positioned in a library as a topic of study, or, in a theatre intended for performance.<sup>6</sup> In more immediate terms, reconsidering and possibly restructuring the accepted histories of the Theatre and Library may assist Michael Witmore's present task as new Director of the Library (as of June 2012) of drafting a strategic plan for the institution - creating a vision,

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Bristol, "Henry Clay Folger, Jr.," *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespearians* 9, (New York Continuum, 2011); 114-195, Alden T. Vaughn and Virginia Mason Vaughn, *Shakespeare In America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, Stephen Grant, "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem: Creating Washington's Folger Shakespeare Library" *Washington History* Vol. 24, No. 1 (2012); 2-21, Christopher Scully, "Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses" (Dissertation: Tufts University, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Christopher Scully, "Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses" (Dissertation: Tufts University, 2008); 163.

identifying values, crafting a mission and setting overall goals for the future of this illustrious research institution.<sup>7</sup>

Creating a plan for the future of a complex institution such as the Folger Shakespeare Library can benefit from a more thorough understanding of its founding and early decades of development. Former Director Hardison promised “legitimizing the Folger Theatre as a serious producer of drama,” in 1969.<sup>8</sup> As recently as 2012, Witmore acknowledged that theatrical performance is an integral part of the Folger Shakespeare Library’s unique ability to tell the “whole story of the humanities.”<sup>9</sup> The Folger Elizabethan Theatre continues to be recognized as an integral and intensely important component of the private research library, even though its early history has been largely ignored by historians.<sup>10</sup> By looking backward and surveying how the Library’s mission developed a ‘working relationship’ with the Theatre, the Library’s path forward over the next eighty years can be as profound as the one it traversed in the first eighty.

Researching the history of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Folgers and the Folger Elizabethan Theatre by using the standard library history chronicles revealed

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<sup>7</sup> Joel Henning, “Shakespeare in the Digital Age,” *Wall Street Journal*, 21 March 2012. Available at: [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204795304577221543266959340.html?mod=WSJ\\_LifeStyle\\_Lifestyle\\_5](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204795304577221543266959340.html?mod=WSJ_LifeStyle_Lifestyle_5) Viewed 7 January 2013.

<sup>8</sup> O. B. Hardison, *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director, 1968-69* ([Washington, D. C.]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1970); 37.

<sup>9</sup> Joel Henning, “Shakespeare in the Digital Age,” *Wall Street Journal*, 21 March 2012. Available at: [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204795304577221543266959340.html?mod=WSJ\\_LifeStyle\\_Lifestyle\\_5](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204795304577221543266959340.html?mod=WSJ_LifeStyle_Lifestyle_5) Viewed 7 January 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Since Hardison’s appointment the Library has witnessed a number of producing entities at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre from ‘The Folger Theatre Group’ to the ‘Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger’ to currently ‘The Folger Theatre.’ While true the Theatre possesses a production history that has experienced extreme ups and downs its productions from the last few years have been particularly recognized for their artistic excellence. While the history of the Theatre’s activities during this forty year period in the Library’s history would make an excellent topic of study, it is currently outside the parameters of the current one. What is important about the Theatre’s history from this period to the current study, however, is how essential a component the Theatre has developed into to the Library’s overall mission.

that answering these questions required going beyond these conventional accounts. Contemporary newspaper and magazine reports covering these topics repeatedly contradicted accepted histories, demonstrating their limited precision. These inconsistencies led to a preliminary examination of the personal and professional records of Henry and Emily Folger, still appropriately housed at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

The wealth of materials available at the Library led to a number of further discoveries. The personal and professional correspondences of Henry Folger revealed information that contested generally accepted histories of the development of his love for Shakespeare. They also suggest that reasons other than nationalistic sentiments may have influenced why the Folgers chose to found the Library in Washington, D. C., contrary to historical reports. Similarly, the correspondences and private papers of Emily Folger revealed the Folgers' great interest in the performance of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Revival movement. Largely ignored by historians for decades, these interests likely contributed to their idea of including a fully functioning Elizabethan-style theatre in their Library project.

Furthermore, discerning the intentions of the Folgers and their architects in designing the Folger Elizabethan Theatre has been confounded for decades, complicated by Library officials' use of a variety of terms – such as “courtyard of an early English inn,”<sup>11</sup> “an impression of an Elizabethan playhouse,”<sup>12</sup> and “intimate

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<sup>11</sup> Esther Ferington, *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); 37.

<sup>12</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Library: A Brief Account* ([Washington, D.C.]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1948); 6.

Elizabethan Theatre”<sup>13</sup> – in their own descriptions. Interestingly, a review of architectural designs and reports in the Folger Archive, as well as correspondences between Folger and the Library project’s two architects, Paul Philippe Cret and Alexander Trowbridge, reveal how heavily the Elizabethan Revival movement influenced the theatre’s architectural design. This influence was confirmed in materials held at the Cret Archives at the University of Pennsylvania and the Athenaeum in Philadelphia, both of which divulged the extensive research of English early modern theatre reconstructions Cret depended on in designing the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

In addition, as mentioned above, during the first thirty-six years of the Library’s history the Theatre saw but one full production of a play produced on the boards of the Elizabethan stage. An array of publications produced by the Library as well as articles published by outside sources offered a confusing hodgepodge of explanations. A review of Emily Folger’s letters held at the Folger Shakespeare Library revealed an account of her unsuccessful attempt to found a school of elocution at the Theatre shortly after the library opened. These same letters also referred to another unsuccessful attempt by an outside party to establish an educational and public program of performance at the Theatre, intended to produce original practices productions of Shakespeare. Investigation of the circumstances surrounding these events revealed Library officials’ struggle to reconcile the existence of the Theatre within the larger building of the Library during the research institution’s first forty years of existence.

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<sup>13</sup> “About the Elizabethan Theatre,” Folger Shakespeare Library website. Available at: <http://www.folger.edu/Content/Whats-On/Folger-Theatre/About-Folger-Theatre/> Viewed 20 March 2013.

It appears these topics have been overlooked by historians due to the continued foregrounding of particular stories by Library officials about the Folgers and the founding of their Library. In essence, there was no need for any contradictory evidence to surface, as the Library had provided seemingly sufficient information on these topics. Besides, a large number of articles written about the Library primarily tended to focus on reporting the various rare materials held in its vaults, a practical practice for any research institution.

Yet, the evidence demonstrates that Henry and Emily Folger recognized the importance of studying Shakespeare, not only from the pages of a manuscript or book, but within the milieu in which the Bard worked – the world of the English early modern theatre. As such, the existence of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, its architectural design and the Folgers intended use of it is one of the most fascinating results of the influence of the Elizabethan Revival movement.<sup>14</sup> The far-reaching effects of this movement can be seen in examples of Elizabethan style architecture constructed in the early nineteenth century in England, Europe, the United States and elsewhere around the globe. This movement evolved over the course of a century, continuing to renew interest even today in the era in which Shakespeare lived. The movement eventually led to experimental theatre productions, the aim of which – in very simplistic terms (and discussed in more detail in Chapter Two) – was to set the Bard's plays in the era in which they were written with productions performed on the types of stages built for Shakespeare's own productions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Speaight first devised this term in *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival* (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1954).

<sup>15</sup> The Elizabethan Revival movement is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

Esther Cloud Dunn recognized the influence of this movement during the beginning of the twentieth century in America. According to Dunn, the period after the Civil War saw the drop in popularity of antiquarianism and the fad of “photographic reproduction” in the *mise-en-scene* in productions of Shakespeare’s plays during the twentieth century, particularly after the First World War Shakespearean productions “offered something new.”<sup>16</sup> Modern dress and location-less or location-mishmash productions by John Gielgud and Orson Welles provided a new and exciting development in Shakespeare in performance in the United States. Dunn attributes these developments to advancements in Shakespearean study that were close to the hearts of Henry and Emily Folger:

“[w]e now know and act upon the knowledge that Shakespeare’s plays were produced with a minimum of scenery and stage illusion. If they were written to be played that way, they should still be played that way. We perceive, too, that the poetry and perception in Shakespeare’s lines must not be smothered by literal setting. Those lines were cunningly devised to evoke from the audience a contributing share toward the realization of the situation.”<sup>17</sup>

For the Folgers, appreciation of this movement is a logical development, considering their veneration of Shakespeare as poet and dramatist, and further evidenced by their desire for original practices Shakespeare productions to be staged in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Although a performance program designed to

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<sup>16</sup> Esther Cloud Dunn, *Shakespeare in America Shakespeare in America*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939); 305.

<sup>17</sup> Dunn, 305.



demonstrate Shakespearean productions utilizing early modern production practices did not materialize at the Library, scholars studying the early modern period in England and Europe have been greatly aided by the Shakespeariana materials this couple collected for over forty years.

From the beginning, evidence suggests those charged with administering and running the Library misunderstood the significance of the theatre space Henry and Emily Folger had funded and their architects created. While the Library's interior architectural design is an obvious result of the Elizabethan Revival movement, Library officials do not use this term when describing the Folgers' project in historical documents. Instead, publications tend to attribute the aesthetic choice to the Folgers' "thought that the scholars who were to work in the Library would feel most at home in surroundings reminiscent of the England of the XVIth or XVIIth centuries."<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, Library officials generally appear unable to reconcile the existence of the specially designed and fully functioning theatre within the library building. The 2002 book *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library* refers to the Elizabethan-styled Theatre as "perhaps the most unusual feature of the Folgers' plan for the Library," a comment that suggests continued puzzlement both with the Theatre's architectural design and the Theatre's very existence.<sup>19</sup> Even more striking is the fact that these sentiments continue after the Theatre has hosted theatrical productions for more than forty years.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> *Folger Shakespeare Library* ([Washington: D.C.]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 31.

<sup>19</sup> Esther Ferington, ed., *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); 37.

<sup>20</sup> During the forty plus years since Hardison's appointment the Library has witnessed a number of producing entities at the Theatre from 'The Folger Theatre Group' to the 'Shakespeare Theatre at the

It can be argued that those charged with running the Library at its founding in 1932 failed to take advantage of an unparalleled opportunity: the chance for a United States-based institution to take a leadership role in the study of Shakespeare in performance. The very fact that it took nearly forty years for the theatre to be used for regularly scheduled theatrical productions (even though the Library's founders included the Theatre in the building for that express purpose) suggests Library officials viewed other activities as a priority. In fact, the Library's operating policies before Hardison's appointment in 1969 tended to follow two activities: growing the rare book collection and pursuing scholarship, activities that can be viewed as contributing to the academization of Shakespeare.<sup>21</sup>

Notwithstanding its missed opportunity, the Folger Shakespeare Library's role in the 'academization' of Shakespeare in the first half of its existence appears due to no fault of its early onsite Directors. The "academization of" or "academizing" Shakespeare – or the late nineteenth and early twentieth century process whereby Shakespeare as a literary figure gained prominence over that of a dramatist – removed Shakespeare from the realm of theatrical production and relegated him as a subject of study from a literary or historical perspective. As Lawrence Levine observes in *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, by the twentieth century Shakespeare became the "possession of the educated portions of

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Folger' to currently 'The Folger Theatre.' While true the Theatre possesses a production history that has experienced extreme ups and downs its productions from the last few years have been recognized for their artistic excellence. While the history of the Theatre's activities during this period in the Library's history would make an excellent topic of study, it is currently outside the parameters of the current one. What is important about the Theatre's history from this period to this study, however, is how essential a component the Theatre has developed into to the Library's overall mission.

<sup>21</sup> Jed I Bergman with William G. Bowen and Thomas I. Nygren, *Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector: Lessons from the Evolution of Five Independent Research Libraries*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); 80.

society who disseminated his plays for the enlightenment of the average folk who were to swallow him not for his entertainment but for their education.”<sup>22</sup>

College curriculums actively encouraged this movement by situating Shakespeare as a topic of literary study in English Departments, leaving productions of Shakespeare to be produced mainly by extra-curricular clubs or organizations on campus. Michael Bristol comments that towards the end of the twentieth century,

Shakespeare scholarship, as a branch of literary studies and of research in the humanities, finds its primary institutional home within the university system, where its findings are disseminated not only to scholars and specialists, but also to a wider audience of undergraduates, many of whom are destined to become policy-makers, or members of professional and administrative cadres.<sup>23</sup>

Here, Bristol illuminates that at colleges and universities the ‘state of Shakespeare’ is positioned as a topic of ‘study’ and not a topic of ‘practice.’ Given that the Folger Shakespeare Library is administered by trustees of Amherst College, it should not be particularly surprising the Library’s actions tended to focus on protecting and aggressively growing the collection and promoting other scholarship activity for the research institution. Devoting efforts and funds to establish a public program of performance at the theatre (which records reflect was a desired

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); 31.

<sup>23</sup> Michael D. Bristol, *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare*, (New York: Routledge, 1990); 37.

component of the Library's Founders) became an insurmountable – and resource-prohibitive – task for the fledgling research institution to consider.

Furthermore, the Library portion of the Folger's Shakespeare memorial was able to begin operations fairly soon after the Library's founding in 1932, thanks to the presence of a staff which had been assembled to organize the vast array of rare materials the Folgers had collected for over forty years. No such concrete plan had been devised for the Theatre by the time of the Library's founding. This demonstrates the Library's early leaders' focus on quickly bringing the collection and reading room to working order and establishing a reputation of scholarly excellence for the founding research institution. The realities of budget and other resource limitations led development of any other public programs to fall to the wayside out of necessity.

O. B. Hardison Jr.'s appointment as Director of the Library in 1969 changed all that. Unlike his predecessors, Hardison recognized the valuable relationship between developing the Library's "programs available to the general public" and cultivating future funding possibilities for the Library.<sup>24</sup> In an effort to dismantle the insular atmosphere created by former Library officials, which catered primarily to visiting academic scholars, Hardison set out immediately upon his appointment to widen the Library's narrow mission.<sup>25</sup> He enlarged existing programs offered at the

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<sup>24</sup> O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director, 1968-69*, ([Washington, D. C.]: Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1970); 37.

<sup>25</sup> O. B. Hardison, Jr. "Put Money in Thy Purse": Supporting Shakespeare" in *Shakespeare Study Today: the Horace Howard Furness Memorial Lectures*, Georgianna Ziegler, ed., (New York: AMS Press, 1986); 164.

Library as well as introducing a number of new ones.<sup>26</sup> Along with hoping to generate future funding possibilities for the Library, Hardison fundamentally viewed the rare materials housed within the library as “the inheritance of all Americans, whatever their level of education, income or background.”<sup>27</sup>

In order to understand these dichotomies attributed to the Folger Elizabethan Theatre it is necessary to review, investigate, and test a number of accepted histories promoted about the Folger Shakespeare Library. With this goal in mind, this study identifies, examines and even deconstructs a number of the Library’s accepted histories which this study considers ‘myths of origin.’ These myths – created, transmuted and still promoted by some current Library officials – effectually contribute to the continuance of the dichotomies regarding the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Teasing out and questioning these myths, and even debunking some of them, logically leads to another important activity: uncovering information these myths may have helped to obscure. Before identifying the particular myths of origin this study examines, it is first helpful to introduce a method in which to view how these myths have functioned or what they have provided the Library since its founding in 1932.

Organizational studies scholar Andrew D. Brown’s 1994 article “Politics, Symbolic Action and Myth Making in Pursuit of Legitimacy,” has provided an interesting lens through which to view a number of myths constructed about Henry

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<sup>26</sup> Jed I Bergman with William G. Bowen and Thomas I. Nygren, *Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector: Lessons from the Evolution of Five Independent Research Libraries*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); 80.

<sup>27</sup> Jed I. Bergman with William C. Bowen and Thomas I. Nygren, “Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector: Lessons from the Evolution of Five Independent Research Libraries,” (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); 80.

and Emily Folger, the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Five particularly salient concepts in Brown's work that have helped develop this study include:

- 1) Myths are considered "narratives or extended metaphors which incorporate organizational meanings derived from past activities."<sup>28</sup>
- 2) Myths can assist in the pursuit of the continued successful existence of an organization.<sup>29</sup>
- 3) Myths can supply a marker of the organization's values and a prescription for the organization's actions.
- 4) Myths may serve within an organization as a way for individuals or groups to legitimize their power relations and actions.
- 5) Myths can exert control over decision principles as well as serve as a guide to the consequences of deviance or obedience of the organization's mission.<sup>30</sup>

Brown's language describing myths and their function at first seems rather harsh when applied to the interpretation of policies and professional practices implemented by officials at the Folger Shakespeare Library during the institution's early years. Suggesting that they would consciously develop and promote untrue stories in order to focus on the kinds of work they preferred or were more comfortable with is too simplistic a description of what appears to have occurred, but it does provide a place to at least begin the exploration of the topic. As Chapter One

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<sup>28</sup> Andrew D. Brown, "Politics, Symbolic Action and Myth Making in Pursuit of Legitimacy," *Organization Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 6 (1994); 863.

<sup>29</sup> Andrew D. Brown, "Politics, Symbolic Action and Myth Making in Pursuit of Legitimacy," *Organization Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 6 (1994); 863. Although Brown's definition of an organization is illuminating I prefer to apply Schwartz's definition of organization here, "large-scale formal work organizations." Howard S. Schwartz, "The Usefulness of Myth and the Myth of Usefulness: A Dilemma for the Applied Organizational Scientist, *Journal of Management*, Vol. 11 no. 1 (1985); 36.

<sup>30</sup> Brown, 863.

will argue, these myths were not systematically created and immediately implemented to reflect institutional policy. Rather, it appears that these myths generally found favor over time, and in the process of recycling them, their development began to provide a stable base from which Library officials could complete important tasks: to found the Library, begin the institution's operations and chart a course for the Library's future development during its fledgling years.

It is important to remember that the Library's founding became threatened after Henry Folger's unexpected death in 1930. As Chapter Three will address in much more detail, the contents of his will made public after his death alerted Amherst Trustees of the honor and responsibility Folger had bestowed upon them. In accepting Folger's bequest, these individuals were thrust into their positions with little preparation, though there is some evidence that Folger had privately consulted with Amherst President Stanley Pease before his death. Even so, monumental tasks lay before the Trustees: finishing the construction phase of the Library, developing an operating procedure for the institution and initiating access to the collection that had been packed away in many warehouses for ten to forty years.

The situation became even more complicated when the \$10 million fund left by Henry Folger to found the Library was diminished to roughly \$3 million, an unfortunate result of the 1929 stock market crash. At the time of his death, Folger also owed \$1.5 million for recent purchases of rare books. Without the donation of another \$3 million by Emily Folger before the Library's opening day ceremonies in April 1932 the Library would have never opened. Luckily, Mrs. Folger's timely

donation allowed their memorial to Shakespeare to exit the construction phase, immediately emerging as a structure of distinction and institution of wonder.

Once the Library's opening was secure, another interesting problem arose: how to explain why such an institution existed. Tasked with situating the Folger Shakespeare Library's significance within the minds of the general public, particularly for so many who experienced the lean years of the Great Depression, it logically followed that Library officials linked the Library project and its founders to particular ideals in which Americans could easily identify. Henry Folger's 'rags to riches' story, from accounts of him barely able to afford to finish his education to eventually becoming a successful tycoon and millionaire in the oil industry, became a favorite story promoted during the Library's early years.

While these particular events have been well documented, another story about Folger that found early favor appears to be unverifiable; namely, the process by which Folger's love of Shakespeare had been sparked by revered American poet, orator and essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson. Linking Folger to Emerson, who famously claimed Shakespeare "wrote the airs for all our modern music; he wrote the text of modern life....he drew the man of England and Europe; the father of the man in America," provided an easily digestible story for those curious as to why an American businessman like Folger would spend so much time, energy and money on collecting materials that pertained to an English playwright.<sup>31</sup>

Unlike other philanthropic projects that possessed an American historical bent, like John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s founding of Colonial Williamsburg or Henry Hornblower II's founding of Plimoth Plantation, situating Folger's target of

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<sup>31</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Representative Men* (Philadelphia: David McKay, 1892); 216.



philanthropy was more difficult to explain. Likewise, explaining Folger's purpose for founding the Library in the United States capital as nationalistic in nature not only provided the Library with immediate worth to the country...it also made for good storytelling.

Additional central questions of this study logically follow: how were these myths utilized to regulate the Folger Shakespeare Library's values and actions of growing the collection and pursuing scholarly activities? And, how did they direct attention away from activities the Library's founders originally envisioned for the Theatre? Furthermore, considering the advancement of the Library's overall mission from 1932 to 2013, are these myths in essence too narrow an interpretation for an institution that strives to broaden its already global appeal, and therefore unnecessary? Do these myths constrict future opportunities for the research institution because of their limitations? In addition to addressing these questions, this study also will consider information about the Theatre that has laid in the proverbial marginalia of the Library's early history, overlooked and obscured by the prescription of these myths. In this process, this study intends first to illuminate the identified myths' varying levels of fallibility, and second to provide intellectual space to consider what information the continued use of these myths may have obscured.

Questioning why the theatre's current history is so sparsely written – as well as why that meager history includes so many incongruent stories – is intended to add to the Library's already majestic history. Although fleshing out the history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre may seem tangential to the history of the Folger Shakespeare Library, these two entities are inexorably linked by physical proximity

as well as by the vision of the library's founders Henry and Emily Folger. By addressing these myths and filling in informational gaps surrounding the Theatre's creation and early utilization, a more congruent historical relationship between the Library and the Theatre may be realized.

Presented below are some of these contradictions that help illustrate the organizational structure of this study's method of identifying and analyzing a number of myths of origin pertaining to the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Folger Elizabethan Theatre and the Library's founders Henry and Emily Folger. In general terms, the three separate sections address: first, the inception for the idea of including the Folger Elizabethan Theatre within the Library building by founders Henry and Emily Folger; second, the Theatre's unique architectural design; and finally, the conflicting reports pertaining to the intended use of the Theatre by the founders.

## **Chapter One: A Shakespeare Memorial**

As mentioned above the Library's founders, Henry Clay Folger (1857-1930) and Emily Clara Jordan Folger (1858-1936) specified the inclusion of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in their remarkable overall vision for the Folger Shakespeare Library. No written history exists, however, suggesting how the inception of the unique-styled Theatre came to be included in the founders' plan. Building such a specific structure alone, not to mention outfitting it as a practical theatre ready for use at the Library's founding, suggests a cultivated and deep appreciation of live theatre by these collectors of Shakespeariana. The absence of a scholarly examination of the

Founders' significant appreciation of Shakespeare as a dramatist seems a rather peculiar development, especially since at least a third of the estimated \$1.5 million Library building budget was invested in extreme construction techniques that adhered to a strict English early modern motif of the Theatre's interior.

Rather, two stories tend to dominate the subject of the Library's creation and founding. The accepted stories of how Henry Folger's love of Shakespeare developed, as well as why the Folgers founded the Library in Washington, D.C., continue to take center stage. Presented numerous times during the Library's eighty-year existence, these stories have developed into pseudo-myths of origin. The well-known story that Ralph Waldo Emerson's words about Shakespeare ignited Henry Folger's passion for the Bard, and that Henry Folger only followed nationalistic inclinations when deciding to found the Library in Washington, D. C., have been told, re-told, altered, in some cases conflated, and passed down since the Library's founding in 1932.

Examining these myths' creation, their cogency and their development over the years reveals that one is based on hearsay, with its validity contested by letters written by Henry Folger himself, and the other is a rather narrow interpretation of the Folgers' motives for founding the Library in the nation's capital. Directing the proverbial spotlight on another part of the Folgers' lives, a part that undoubtedly inspired the genesis of their Shakespeare memorial, it is possible to consider how the Folgers' interest in theatrical activities may have influenced them to include an Elizabethan-style playhouse within the building of the Library. Exploring the Folgers' appreciation of Shakespeare as a dramatist also allows for acknowledgement

of the level to which the Folgers venerated the act of attending live theatre, particularly plays by William Shakespeare that were produced in a manner influenced by the Elizabethan Revival movement.

## **Chapter Two: Folger Shakespeare Theatre Architecture and the Elizabethan Revival Movement**

Though the Theatre holds the distinction of being the first permanent Elizabethan-style theatre built in the United States, Library officials continue to overlook the Theatre's architectural significance as an essential artifact of the Elizabethan Revival movement. The Library's utilization of myths of origin, which incorrectly label the space as an 'inn-yard' theatre, 'a type of theatre Shakespeare may have encountered in his day' or 'a theatre containing elements from many theatres of Shakespeare's time' negates the complex historical arrangement of architectural elements contained within the walls of the Theatre.

These overly simplistic explanations, developed and promoted since the Library's founding, deny the historical value of architect Paul P. Cret's painstakingly-researched design of an English early modern outdoor playhouse. Cret collaborated with the Library's consulting architect William Trowbridge and founder Henry Folger when developing his design for the Theatre, a process which began in November 1928 and continued through the construction phase of the Library building. When Henry Folger succumbed to post-surgical heart failure in June 1930, he left the Library's construction in the hands of Library Emily Folger, Cret, his colleague

Trowbridge and construction firm the James Baird Company. The Co-Founder with these artisans found themselves solely tasked with creating something that had never existed before in the United States.

The result of their work is a magnificent interpretation of Elizabethan Revival movement-inspired architecture, based on extant evidence of playhouses and theatres from the early modern period and modified for three specific reasons: first, to build the Theatre building inside the walls of the Library building; second, to fit the perceived needs of the Library as imagined by the founders; and third, to appropriately furnish the Theatre for the modern use of a twentieth-century audience. The myths of origin mentioned above that have helped to explain away the intricate design of the Theatre appear to be inspired in part by Henry Folger's decision not to pursue a reconstruction of a singular English early modern theatre or playhouse, an idea he contemplated during the preliminary planning phase of the Library. In the end, Folger preferred a theatre designed to suggest elements of an English early modern theatre, a decision made to avoid criticism of the space if more complete data about these structures came to light in the future.

An interesting development is revealed after consulting and interpreting extant evidence scattered between half a dozen archives and/or libraries, materials pertaining to the process of the Theatre's design such as letters, early drawings, minutes of meetings, and research notes on English early modern theatres and blueprints. After Folger's decision, Cret moved forward in the design process, drafting working drawings for the Theatre based on one of his early designs inspired heavily by the Fortune Playhouse. Cret even states in the 1933 *The Folger Shakespeare Library*

published by the Trustees of Amherst that the Theatre's design is heavily indebted to this specific playhouse. As Chapter Two will discuss, he consulted various scholars' research on theatres of the period to fill gaps in information about the structure of the Fortune in order to execute a realized design that would suit his client Henry Folger.

Surprisingly, however, Library officials chose to promote a vastly more generalized and, as evidence suggests, an incorrect description of the Folger Elizabeth Theatre. Deconstructing the myths of origin about the Theatre's architectural design and acknowledging the complex design process that created the Folger Elizabethan Theatre can help to finally situate properly the Theatre within the context of the Elizabethan Revival movement; a movement responsible for spawning a global fascination with English early modern play houses, their reconstruction and their enduring allure for hosting original practices productions of Shakespeare's plays.

### **Chapter Three: Using the Theatre – the First Thirty-Eight Years**

As mentioned above, the Theatre was originally conceived and built for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays in original practices productions, again a product of the Elizabethan Revival movement. Yet, before 1970, the Theatre had been utilized only once for a full production of a play since the Library's founding in 1932. Library officials tend to provide only one reason explaining why the Theatre was not used during that time period: that Henry Folger personally saw to it that the theatre could not host theatrical productions due to an agreement made with District of

Columbia building officials, reportedly stemming from the Theatre's non-compliance with contemporary fire codes of 1932.

According to the story, D.C. officials approved the building plans for the Theatre only after Folger entered into a contract that effectively erased the possibility for theatrical performances to be held in the Theatre. Library officials' use of this myth of origin before 1969 makes sense, given that their strategic plan for the Library focused on literary-based activities such as organizing and growing the collection and pursuing publication opportunities. Running a theatre company at that time was beyond the scope of the Library budget's fiscal capabilities and the professional competence (or interest) of those individuals in Library leadership positions.

Unfortunately, this development also meant that the Library excluded any engagement with Shakespeare as a dramatist, an activity the Founders' had intended their Shakespeare memorial to do in an effort to appeal beyond the type of individuals who would visit the Library to conduct research. While Henry Folger clearly stipulated that the Library's rare collection would not be available to the general public, the founders devoted a significant portion of the Library building's square footage as general public use spaces: the Theatre and the Exhibition Hall. Promoting this myth allowed early Library officials to classify the Theatre as a Period Room, promoting it to the public as an exhibition and not a space appropriate for theatrical productions.

The 'Folger Contract myth' survived even after O. B. Hardison ordered the Theatre fire-proofed and a permit of occupancy obtained so the Folger Theatre Group could begin staging productions in the Theatre in 1970. The story's sustainability

continues, in part, because the Library began producing Theatre in the ‘period room.’ Hardison had ingeniously solved the problem that other Library Directors and Amherst Trustees could not. Though Hardison owes a great part of his success in founding the Folger Group in 1970 to advances in fireproofing technologies, it can also be said that he succeeded in large part simply because he wanted to. He understood the long-term financial benefit theatrical productions could provide in generating contributions to the Library’s capital campaign, which he initiated soon after his appointment. This approach is in stark contrast to that of his predecessors, who had previously described theatrical productions as disruptive to the work of researchers at the library. It has even been suggested that the Library developed a quasi-anti-theatrical bias during the decades from its founding up until Hardison’s appointment.<sup>32</sup>

By examining how the promotion of this myth developed and was used, one can understand that the perceived anti-theatrical prejudice developed due to mounting frustration in the need to defend year after year why the Folger Shakespeare Library produced no drama – even though it had a practical space ideally fit for it. Simply put, Library officials wanted to produce theatrical productions in the theatre, but believed they could not.

This unfortunate dichotomy is apparent in the Library’s attempt to begin a regular program for performances in 1949 soon after the Amherst trustees appointed the second Director of the Library Louis B. Wright. In an effort to expand the programs offered the public by the Library, Wright arranged for an original practices

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<sup>32</sup> Christopher Scully, “Constructed Places: Shakespeare’s American Playhouses,” (Dissertation, Tufts University, 2008); 72.



production of *Julius Caesar* by the college group the Amherst Masquers to play for a week in the Theatre. Tickets were sold for the production and the National Broadcast Company arranged to broadcast one performance live to a large portion of the United States.

The experiment caused a great deal of embarrassment for the Library when D.C. officials objected to the production because the Library did not possess a certificate of occupancy allowing them to charge admission for the productions. While the production of *Julius Caesar* completed its short run at the Theatre and a production of *Hamlet* was contemplated a year later, the new program had to be abandoned because the Library could not obtain an occupancy permit from the city. Ironically, if the Library had developed either of two performance programs that contained an educational component proposed for the Theatre in the 1930s, it is likely an occupancy permit would have been in place in 1949.

Co-founder Emily Folger and American Theatre director, educator and proponent of original practices productions of Shakespeare Thomas Wood Stevens both attempted to found performance programs in the Theatre soon after the Library's founding. Unfortunately, Library officials deemed both programs unsuitable for the fledgling research institution. Mrs. Folger's pursuit of a school of elocution was viewed as an irrelevant and outlandish proposal for the Library. And, though Stevens' proposal to film original practices productions of Shakespeare in the Theatre for distribution to colleges and high schools was originally deemed meritorious, the Library passed on Stevens' proposal because the Library itself had yet to establish a reputation for scholarly excellence.

These decisions contributed not only to the Library's inability to produce commercial theatre productions in the Theatre later, but also contributed to the perception of the Library as an unwelcoming place to scholars and the public. Although not necessarily presented as a cautionary tale, analysis of this development serves as an important reminder: that such institutions like the Library cannot flourish by narrowing their activities to such an extent that they alienate potential stakeholders, advocates and funders.

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Overall, this study attempts to re-contextualize the early history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, thereby repositioning the Library's relationship to the Theatre as a concept in the minds of the founders, as a purely physical structure, and as a place intended for theatrical experimentation. This study differs from that of any others about the Library in several ways: first, by simply focusing on the Folger Elizabethan Theatre as a topic. Second, this study questions and analyzes a number of myths of origin about the Folger Shakespeare Library, its founders and the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, aiming to demonstrate how the Library has historicized itself. Finally, by offering information not presented before about the Folgers' appreciation and engagement with the Elizabethan Revival movement, this study attempts to, for the first time, reposition the Theatre's history within that of the Library's in an attempt to allow for a more congruent integration of them in the future. All of these topics, once fully presented, will flesh out the early history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, illustrating how alliances within the Folger Shakespeare Library used particular narratives to promote the organization's values and actions. Meanwhile, any

opportunity the theatre would be used for its original purpose as intended by the Founders fell to the wayside out of necessity.

In essence, this work is an archival study. It is an exploration of how unutilized materials, housed for decades and easily accessible, can further a greater understanding of the Folger Shakespeare Library organization's missions and actions. It will also bring to light the circumstances that surrounded the missed opportunity to exploit and celebrate the first permanent reconstruction of an Elizabethan-style theatre in the United States. This theatre, housed within a library building originally dedicated to the study of Shakespeare, should be commemorated as an important development in the performance of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Revival movement in not only the United States, but the world. This study strives to illuminate how the significance of this Theatre has been downplayed as well as finally insert it in the annals of these two areas of study.

## Chapter 1: A Shakespeare Memorial

Henry Folger described his efforts of collecting Shakespeariana and founding the Folger Shakespeare Library with a poetic turn of phrase: “[t]o forward the work of imagination in interpreting human nature from age to age would be the worthiest function of a Shakespeare memorial.”<sup>33</sup> Henry and Emily Folger intended their ‘Shakespeare memorial,’ a complex that included a library, an exhibition hall and an Elizabethan-styled theatre, to promote research and the communication of that research to the citizenry. Before his death in June 1930, Henry Folger listed the memorial’s specific functions: additions to book funds, research and extension. Folger considered fellowships and publications as research activities, and he noted two activities in the category of extension: lectures and plays.<sup>34</sup> According to the architect who designed the theatre, Paul Phillippe Cret, the Folgers desired “a small theatre to be used for the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays in their original staging, and for lectures or concerts.”<sup>35</sup> From this evidence it is safe to surmise that the Folgers intended the Elizabethan-styled Theatre to be utilized as an important tool to extend the research function; a laboratory, of sorts, to further the type of performance research that William Poel, Nugent Monck, Harley Granville Barker, B. Iden Payne, and Ben Greet conducted in early modern production practices.

How, then, did the Folgers develop the idea to include this type of theatre project in their Shakespeare memorial? Examining their engagement with various forms of live theatre can begin to answer that question.

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in George F. Whicher, “Shakespeare for America,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 147 (June, 1931); 768.

<sup>34</sup> Handwritten note by Henry Folger, n.d., Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>35</sup> Paul Phillippe Cret, “The Building” in *Folger Shakespeare Library* ([Washington, D.C.]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst, 1933); 32.

From their college years, the Folgers were avid theatre-goers, gaining exposure to a number of productions that utilized, to varying degrees, early modern theatre practices. This exposure could partially explain their subsequent plan to utilize the Folger Elizabethan Theatre for early modern theatre productions of Shakespeare. In addition, the Folgers studied elocution and oratory, a typical undertaking of many professional actors of the period. However, Henry and Emily did so in college rather than in the context of the theatre. Their education and exposure explains their unusual ability to critically assess the numerous performances they witnessed – assessments they recorded in letters and diaries.

A number of examples exist of the Folgers' unusual critical abilities, as well as Henry's habit of giving advice to celebrated theatre veterans. He exchanged friendly correspondence for nearly twenty-five years with English producer, director and actor Ben Greet.<sup>36</sup> In one 1904 letter, Folger even advised Greet on crafting a successful New York season for his theatre company. In another case, Folger wrote to one of his and Emily's favorite actors, E. H. Sothorn, suggesting directorial changes for scenes from his production of *Hamlet*. Emily Folger's diary, *Plays I Have Seen*, was similarly illustrative of their assessments, revealing the couple's opinions on a variety of dimensions, such as directors' interpretations of productions, theatre architecture, use of costumes, scenery, lighting and music, audience size and their reactions.

Further underscoring the true purpose of their project is the very process the Folgers undertook to name it. They first considered calling their library the "Folger Shakespeare Memorial," before moving on to the "Folger Shakespeare Foundation"

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<sup>36</sup> Greet's career is discussed further in Chapter Two.

and finally settling on the “Folger Shakespeare Library.”<sup>37</sup> Their ultimate name selection suggests a much more specific purpose than the first two more general names they considered, both of which would have lent themselves to a variety of activities. Yet the Folgers thought it prudent to select the simplest term best suited their enterprise, which was firmly positioned as a scholarly research institution as evidenced by the chiseling of “library” into the building’s marble façade.<sup>38</sup>

Interestingly, however, performance research was not included as one of the Library’s activities when it was founded in 1932, and historians have continued to overlook the Folgers’ history of engagement with live theatre since that time. In 1933, members of the Amherst Trustees serving on the Folger Shakespeare Library committee interpreted Henry Folger’s expressed mission in a very specific way, believing he wanted the library to “be used for the advancement of literary study in the United States.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, during the first fifteen years the library operated, when Joseph Quincy Adams served as Head of Research, Acting Director and finally Director of the library – and Stanley King served as President of Amherst College – the Folger Elizabethan Theatre’s purpose was to advance “Shakespearean culture.”<sup>40</sup> This rather ambiguous phrase would come to mean that during the library’s first decade of operation scholarly lectures, musical performances, and acting recitals

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<sup>37</sup>“Program for the Folger Shakespeare Memorial,” n.d. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington 31 December 1928 and Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington 20 June 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>38</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington 20 June 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>39</sup> “Forward,” *The Folger Shakespeare Library* ([Washington, D.C.]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); vii.

<sup>40</sup> William Slade, *Report of the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library; for the Year Ending June 30, 1933* ([Washington, D.C.]: Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 14.

would constitute the extent of the public activities offered in the Theatre.<sup>41</sup> Library officials charged with running the new research institution thought it more prudent to focus on three basic activities; first, organize the Folgers' rare materials to make them available to scholars, second, continue collecting rare materials that would further expand and enhance the Folgers' collection, and third, develop scholarship and publishing opportunities.<sup>42</sup>

This chapter explores how the Trustees' commitment to a 'literary' plan for the library coincided with the development of two stories about Henry Folger: first, that his love of Shakespeare was sparked by reading Ralph Waldo Emerson's praise of Shakespeare; and second, that Folger's choice of Washington, D.C. as the Library's host city was bred of nationalistic sentiments. Further examination reveals disconcerting inconsistencies and inaccuracies in both stories.

This chapter will investigate the genesis of these two stories and their evolution into myths of origin, by presenting evidence of a different spark for Folger's intense feelings for Shakespeare as well as additional factors influencing the

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<sup>41</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, *A Report on Progress, 1931-1941*, ([Washington, D.C.]: Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1942); 56. The number of scholarly lectures (9) outweighed the number of acting recitals (4) and musical recitals (1).

<sup>42</sup> William Slade discusses arrangements for making materials accessible to scholars in *Report of the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library: For the Year Ending June 30, 1933*, ([Washington, D.C.]: Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933). Adams discusses the genesis of the "Folger Shakespeare Library Publications" in Adams, *A Report on Progress, 1931-1941* ([Washington, D.C.]: Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1942); 52-54. See James G. McManaway, "Survey of the Harmsworth Collection," *Amherst Graduates' Quarterly* (August 1938) for a purchase in 1937 brokered by Joseph Quincy Adams that made the Folger Library rank with the British Museum, the Bodleian, and the Huntington as a repository of English books printed between 1475 and 1640. Stanley King discusses the process of purchasing rare materials for the Library, including the Harmsworth collection during Adams Directorship in *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1950); 27-35. King also mentions the Rockefeller Foundation awarded a matching grant of \$50,000 to the Folger Shakespeare Library to "purchase and catalogue early books and manuscripts." See King, 35. As discussed in Chapter Three, the Rockefeller Foundation had offered a grant in the 1930s to help establish a public program of performance in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, which the Library declined.

Folgers' decision to choose Washington, D.C. as the home of their legacy. Because these two stories hold such prominence in the library's process of historicizing itself – and have consistently been promoted by Library officials, scholars and journalists – this evidence is critical to a fuller and more accurate understanding of the Library's purpose as envisioned by the Founders.<sup>43</sup>

This chapter is divided into three separate sections. The first and second sections are dedicated to the deconstruction and reframing of the Folger-Emerson myth and the nationalistic sentiments myth discussed above. The third section analyzes the Folgers' engagement with live theatre, suggesting it greatly contributed to the development of the Folgers' 'Shakespeare memorial' that produced their plan for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

### Section 1: The Folger-Emerson Myth

#### Subsection 1: Henry Clay Folger

Henry Clay Folger was born into a family with an American lineage pre-dating the Revolutionary War. In 1635, Peter Folger immigrated to the New World from Norwich, England and settled on the Island of Nantucket.<sup>44</sup> Folger's ancestors included the mother of Benjamin Franklin and the founder of Folger's coffee.<sup>45</sup> Born on June 18, 1857 to Henry Clay Folger Sr. and Eliza Jane Clark, Henry Clay Folger,

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<sup>43</sup> A development discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>44</sup> Will Gardner, *A Clock that Talks and What it Tells: A Portrait Story of the Maker: Hon. Walter Folger, Jr.* (Nantucket: Whaling Museum Publications, 1954), 111.  
[Washington, D.C.]: Printed for the

<sup>45</sup> Michael D. Bristol, "Henry Clay Folger, Jr.," *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespearians* 9, (New York: Continuum, 2011); 116, 118.



Jr. grew up with meager beginnings in Brooklyn, New York.<sup>46</sup> While attending public school he won an academic scholarship to attend Brooklyn's Adelphi Academy, a private preparatory school founded in 1863. At Adelphi, Folger befriended classmate Charles Millard Pratt, eldest son of early oil magnate and philanthropist Charles Pratt, who founded Pratt Institute in 1887. Their friendship would play a great role in Folger's future.

William C. Peckham, an instructor at Adelphi Academy, took an interest in Folger and Pratt and recommended that they apply to attend his alma mater, Amherst College.<sup>47</sup> Both were accepted, and after graduating from Adelphi Academy in 1875, Folger and Pratt followed Peckham's advice and continued their studies at Amherst College.<sup>48</sup> At Amherst, both Pratt and Folger joined the fraternity Alpha Delta Phi, and Folger went on to distinction when elected to the Phi Beta Kappa society.<sup>49</sup>

It was at Amherst that Folger's oratorical skills became clear. In fact, Sandra M. Gustafson has called Folger a "product of the culture that celebrated oratory as the preeminent republican verbal art."<sup>50</sup> Amherst College highly promoted the study of oratory and this subject, along with literary studies, was Folger's focus.<sup>51</sup> As a freshman, he explored an interest in elocution after being chosen to compete for the

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<sup>46</sup> Martha Grogan, "Henry Folger as Book Collector and the Folger Shakespeare Library," (M.S. Thesis: University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1972), 2.

<sup>47</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1950); 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Magnolia Oil News*, Founder's Number (April 1931), 8.

<sup>49</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Cornell, Cornell University Press, 1950); 4.

<sup>50</sup> Sandra M. Gustafson, "Eloquent Shakespeare" in *Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship and Performance*, Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans and Mimi Godfrey, eds. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011); 71.

<sup>51</sup> "Henry Clay Folger and the Shakespeare Library," *Amherst Graduates' Quarterly*, 20 (November, 1930); 6.

Kellogg Prize Speaking Award during commencement week in June 1876 – a competition that he did not win.<sup>52</sup>

Undeterred, however, he continued his efforts to display his oratorical skills, recognized for excellence during his senior year when his classmates elected him to deliver the address, “The Sovereignty of Sentiment’ for the Ivy Oration during Commencement Week in 1879.<sup>53</sup> During the same Commencement ceremonies, he was one of three students chosen to give a Scientific Oration.<sup>54</sup> Perhaps the highest honor Folger received at Amherst, however, was first prize in the Hyde Oratorical Contest, for which he chose as his subject Alfred Tennyson.<sup>55</sup> In a letter to his mother, Folger confessed that, “[i]f I should take the Hyde for which there is about one chance in six, it would be the best thing that I have done in my college course.”<sup>56</sup>

Folger also displayed an interest in performance while in college, participating in the Alpha Delta Phi Quartet and the Glee Club.<sup>57</sup> These interests led him to take part in a production of a comic opera at the college. When hearing a friend of the family had seen a production of H.M.S. Pinafore at the Standard Theatre in New York, Folger had many questions about the performance of the character Dick Deadeye, including “[w]hat was his favorite attitude? How was he dressed? Did he

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<sup>52</sup> *Springfield Republican*, April 19, 1876. Box 29, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington; Program: Amherst College ‘78 & ‘79 Kellogg Prize Speaking. Folger Collection, Box 29, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>53</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Cornell, Cornell University Press, 1950); 4 and Program: “1879 Programme of Public Exercises during Commencement Week at Amherst College Beginning Sunday June 29.” Folger Collection, Box 29, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>54</sup> Program: “Fifty-eighth Commencement of Amherst College, Thursday, July 3, 1879.” Folger Collection, Box 29, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>55</sup> “Henry Clay Folger and the Shakespeare Library,” *Amherst Graduates’ Quarterly*, XX (November, 1930), 6-7.

<sup>56</sup> Letter, Henry Clay Folger, Amherst to Eliza Jane Clark Folger, Brooklyn, June 25, 1879, Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>57</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 4.

have a hump? His head? His body? Did he dance at all? Did he have anything to do with the Sisters, etc.? How did he occupy himself when not singing? [Have him recall to me] [e]verything that he can remember about the wretch!”<sup>58</sup> In the letter Folger also references a production of the same comic opera by Gilbert and Sullivan to be produced in Amherst during his senior year. Folger was cast as the character in which he was inquiring, Dick Deadeye, a cynical sailor in this production that included Amherst students and local community members.<sup>59</sup>

Folger’s life nearly changed significantly during his junior year at Amherst, when his father’s millinery business failed and it seemed as if Folger Jr. would be forced to drop out of school. Luckily for Folger, his classmates Charles Pratt and William M. Ladd came to his rescue, offering to loan him the tuition money that allowed him to graduate on time.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, his family’s financial problems forcing Folger to choose between having his parents attend his graduation or receiving the money it would cost his parents to travel from Brooklyn to Massachusetts. On that subject, Folger wrote to his mother:

I would wish to have you here [sic] commencement but felt, that  
circumstances as they are, the only proper thing for me to do would be  
to state the cost and leave you to decide – Had I the money you would

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<sup>58</sup> Letter from Henry Clay Folger, Amherst to Eliza Jane Clark Folger, Brooklyn, May 18, 1879. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>59</sup> Glee Club 1870-1990, Box 2 Folger 9, Music at Amherst College Collection at the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections reveals that the Glee Club at Amherst performed *H.M.S. Pinafore* on June 17, 1879. [http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma63\\_list.html](http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma63_list.html) viewed October 15, 2008.

<sup>60</sup> *Henry C. Folger 18 June 1857-11 June 1930*, (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931), 24. In an article printed after Henry Folger’s death, he is reported to have been awarded a scholarship from Charles Pratt in order to finish his studies at Amherst. This is an example of the manipulation of the ‘Folger story’ that is prevalent in many works on the Folgers.

come. Had you the money and were my circumstances unchanged, I would prefer the money to your presence.<sup>61</sup>

Though at first appearing harsh in the eyes of a parent, Folger's sentiment speaks to his pragmatism at such an early age. This trait was exhibited throughout Folger's life; even after acquiring a fortune over many years of hard work, he and his wife Emily continued to spend and live moderately.<sup>62</sup>

Folger felt torn over what path to take following his 1879 graduation from Amherst. The options open to him were to continue at Amherst as a tutor, teach elocution at a public school in a western U.S. town or go to work for the father of his friend and classmate, Charles Millard Pratt, to whom he owed money.<sup>63</sup> For Folger, he only considered two of the options as potential futures when he commented to his mother, "I'm undecided about next year – about what I ought to do. It is not seldom that a fellow has two courses open to him and the reasons seem equally strong for either. That's just my case."<sup>64</sup> Ultimately, Folger chose the part-time clerkship offered by Charles Pratt, an

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<sup>61</sup> Henry Clay Folger, Amherst to Eliza Jane Clark Folger, Brooklyn, 22 June 1879. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>62</sup> Michael Bristol suggests the ever rising cost of purchasing rare materials demanded that the Folgers adhere to a modest mode of living. See "Henry Clay Folger, Jr." *Great Shakespeareans: Bradley, Greg, Folger 9* (New York: Continuum, 2011); 141. In these discussions Folger's pragmatism is always stressed as a means to distinguish Folger from other tycoons of the Gilded Age who also established institutions such as John D. Rockefeller (University of Chicago), John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (Colonial Williamsburg), Henry E. Huntington (Huntington Library). Interestingly the founder of Plimoth Plantation, Henry Hornblower II, is framed as a congenial enthusiast with a passion for history who reluctantly followed in his father's footsteps and entered the world of finance in order to fund his dream.

<sup>63</sup> *Henry C. Folger 18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930*, (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931); 24.

<sup>64</sup> Henry Clay Folger, Amherst to Eliza Jane Clark, Brooklyn, 22 June 1879. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

early partner with John D. Rockefeller in the oil industry.<sup>65</sup> This path also provided Folger with the means to repay his educational loan, pursue a law degree and eventually begin collecting Shakespeariana.

While clerking for Pratt, Folger studied law at Columbia University and graduated *cum laude* in 1881, the same year he was accepted into the New York Bar.<sup>66</sup> Instead of following a career in law, however, Pratt persuaded Folger to continue working for his company. Continuing with the clerkship, Folger entered the oil business and steadily rose through the ranks of the Standard Oil Company until retiring as President of Standard Oil in 1923 and Chairman in 1928.

Folger was part of a new generation of men who infused the burgeoning oil industry during the late nineteenth century as John D. Rockefeller's generation began to age and retire. In *The Heroic Age of American Enterprise* Allan Nevins' describes these two generations working side by side,

[a]s the old generation of Standard Oil leaders were drawn away from 26 Broadway, a group of somewhat different type took charge...fewer of them were self-made, or trained in the school of hard knocks; more were college-bred men of travel and reading, versatile in their tastes.<sup>67</sup>

With the money generated from working at Pratt's oil company came opportunity and freedom, and Folger, thanks to this work, would ultimately be in a position to

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<sup>65</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1950); 4.

<sup>66</sup> James G. McManaway, "The Folger Shakespeare Library," *Shakespeare Survey Volume 1: Shakespeare and his Stage*. Ed., Allardyce Nicoll. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1948); 57.

<sup>67</sup> Allan Nevins, *The Heroic Age of American Enterprise*, vol. II (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), 443.

purchase a large amount of rare and expensive early English books, particularly those volumes that pertained to Shakespeare's life and work.

#### Subsection 2: A Passion for Shakespeare

How did Folger develop such a passion for collecting Shakespeariana and the idea for founding the Folger Shakespeare Library? Probably the most famous story explaining this development is the one most often referred to in writings on the Folgers and their Library. The oft-repeated story has developed into a modern-day myth of a young, impressionable mind, a celebrated American poet/orator/writer and a renowned early modern playwright and poet.

According to the story, Folger attended a lecture during his final year at Amherst given by Ralph Waldo Emerson on "Superlative or Mental Temperance," in which he stresses the importance of using plain and direct speech and action in life. In certain phrases, one is struck by the similarities between Emerson's words and those used by others to describe Henry Folger. One could argue these same words aptly described Folger's future pursuit of collecting Shakespeariana:

But whilst thus everything recommends simplicity and temperance of action; the utmost directness, the positive degree, we mean thereby that "rightly to be great is not to stir without great argument." *Whenever the true objects of action appear, they are to be heartily sought. Enthusiasm is the height of man; it is the passing from the human to the divine.*<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> My emphasis.

It is said that, struck by Emerson's speech, Folger sought out other examples of his work. At some later point – it is unclear when – Folger came upon an excerpt of a speech Emerson delivered before the Saturday Club in Boston in 1864, entitled "On the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's Birth."<sup>69</sup> This single speech is said to have ignited the passion within Folger to commit his time and money to the pursuit of purchasing Shakespeariana over the next forty years. In the printed version of this speech, Emerson praises the bard with such phrases as,

[w]herever there are men, and in the degree in which they are civil, have power of mind, sensibility to beauty, music, the secrets of passion, and the liquid expression of thought, he [Shakespeare] has risen to his place as the first poet of the world.<sup>70</sup>

At the dedication of the Library in 1932, two years after the death of Henry Folger, the President of Amherst College, Stanley Pease, was the first to publically reference this story. Pease shared with the distinguished audience that included President Henry Hoover:

during his Senior year his mind had been greatly stirred by a lecture by the aged Ralph Waldo Emerson, and it was an encomium of Emerson's upon Shakespeare which seems first definitely to have started his life-long interest in that poet."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> William Dana Orcutt, *From My Library Walls: A Kaleidoscope of Memories*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., 1945); 205.

<sup>70</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Shakespeare," *The Atlantic* 94, No. 563 (September 1904); 365 Viewed 22 June 2012. Available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/ideastour/arts/emerson-full.html>

<sup>71</sup> "Introductory Remarks by President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library, April 23, 1932." Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

The ticket Folger bought for twenty-five cents to attend Emerson's address in 1879 currently sits in a display case in the Founder's Room at the Library. This room was intended for use by Mr. and Mrs. Folger, part of a private section of the Library, had he survived.

In fairness, there is more permanent linkage between the physical building of the Library and Emerson. The Folgers chose a number of quotes about Shakespeare to adorn the Library building, including one from Emerson's poem 'Solution,' prominently carved into the marble above the large wood-burning fireplace in the Gail Kern Paster Reading Room:

England's genius filled all measure  
Of heart and soul, of strength and pleasure,  
Gave to the mind its Emperor,  
And life was larger than before:  
Nor sequent centuries could hit  
Orbit and sum of Shakespeare's wit.  
The men who lived with him became  
Poets, for the air was fame.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Joseph T. Foster, "Folger: The Biggest Little Library in the World," *National Geographic Magazine* 100, No. 3, (September, 1951); 411. The list of publications that give this story as the reason Henry Folger developed such an interest in Shakespeare include "Henry Clay Folger: A Search for Shakespeare," *Petroleum Today* (Summer 1971); 24-25, William Dana Orcutt, *From My Library Walls: A Kaleidoscope of Memories*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., 1945); 205.



After the Library's dedication, the Amherst Trustees published in 1932 a small volume about the newly founded research institution, *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, as a means to introduce the newly dedicated Library to the general public. For the first time in print, this volume included a more detailed re-telling of the Emerson story in an essay by Joseph Quincy Adams. Appointed Head of Research at the Library by the Folgers, Adams provided a version of this 'origin' story with more specific details:

[i]n his Senior year at college he attended – though few of his fellow students availed themselves of the opportunity – a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson on “Superlative or Mental Temperance”; and so profoundly did the beautiful English and flaming intellect of the speaker inspire him that when, shortly after, he came upon an excerpt from an address which Emerson had made in 1864 before the Saturday Club of Boston, on the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth, he read it with avidity. Emerson's glowing eulogy of Shakespeare as the world's outstanding genius fired young Folger's imagination, and sent him at once to a thorough study of the works of the great master. In spite of straitened means, he purchased Routledge's “Handy-Volume” edition of the poet in thirteen small volumes, which, so he confided to one of his friends, he was accustomed to read, after his scholastic duties were over, “far into the night.” Mrs. Folger states that her husband's chance discovery of the Saturday Club address by Emerson constitutes the

real beginning of his passionate devotion to Shakespeare. We can therefore understand why, when he came to plan the Library, he ordered to be carved over the large fireplace in the Reading Room lines from Emerson embodying the thought of that address; and why, when the building was dedicated, the address itself was read to the assembled guests.”<sup>73</sup>

Adams’ report contains an important facet of this origin story; namely, that it is a product of second-hand information from Emily Folger and a mysterious unnamed “other.” Though he was a well-respected Shakespearean scholar in his own right, Adams was content with taking Mrs. Folger at her word and was comfortable with coupling it with another story from an unnamed source.

While Pease chose in his founding day address to credit Emerson’s words as the impetus of Folger’s love of Shakespeare, Adams found it necessary to add another layer. For Adams, Emily Folger’s claim that Emerson’s Shakespeare Tercentenary speech served as the spark of her husband’s love of Shakespeare did not sufficiently back the story. In need of reference to personal engagement with Shakespeare to complete the tale, Adams added the anecdote about Folger purchasing a copy of Shakespeare’s works and studying it at night, a story provided by a mysterious ‘friend.’

As presented by Adams, the story conjures images of the young Folger, weary from his Amherst studies, sitting in his room late at night. A lone candle burning by

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<sup>73</sup> Adams, Joseph Quincy, “The Library,” *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (1932); 14-5. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman speculates in the eulogy he gave at Henry Folger’s funeral that “[h]is interest in Shakespeare...received its first impulse, in all probability, from the publication of the photographic copy of the Halliwell-Phillipps First Folio.” See *Henry C. Folger, 18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930*, (New Haven, Privately Printed, 1931); 25.

his side, one can see Folger's eyes transfixed upon the page of one of Shakespeare's plays, unable to put away the book until the wee hours of the morning. With this story, Adams effectively romanticizes Folger's actions, suggesting the life-altering power Shakespeare's works may have over an individual simply by reading them. Adams pushes the story further, using Folger's brush with Emerson as a precursor to the choice of 'Solution' to help adorn the Library building, effectively linking the physical existence of the Library building to the famed essayist and lecturer.

Examining the structure of Adams' essay – both what it contains as well as what is absent – provides further insight in how Adams' framed the historical significance of the Library project. As seen above, the Adams essay contained reference to the public reading of Emerson's 'Tercentenary of Shakespeare's Birth' address at the Library's founding day ceremonies. However, Adams omits that British-born actress Edith Wynne Matthison was who actually read the address.

An acquaintance of the Folgers from New York, Matthison had performed on Broadway and worked in Ben Greet's company performing in productions of *Everyman* and Shakespearean productions influenced by the Elizabethan Revival movement. The choice to read Emerson's address aloud at the opening day ceremonies can be viewed as a tribute to Henry Folger as well as a nod to how his love of Shakespeare truly developed – by seeing it performed. However, for Adams' (as well as Emily Folger's and the Amherst Trustees') purposes on such an occasion, that was not essential. Though potentially small, Adams' choice not to reference who read the address can be viewed as erasing any theatrical contextualization of the Folgers' library project.

Adams' deletion, whether intentional or coincidental, is not a lone example. In his introduction of Matthison during the founding day ceremony, President Pease chose not to refer to her as an actress but rather introduced her as a "child of Warwickshire, a distinguished *interpreter* of its supreme poet."<sup>74</sup> In addition, Pease's reference to Shakespeare as 'supreme poet' – intended for a twentieth-century general public who may not have been aware that playwrights were referred to as poets in early modern England – may also be viewed as an act of erasure, of denying Shakespeare's continued prominence as a playwright.

A brief departure from Adams' essay to examine the founding day ceremony reveals additional acts of erasing any theatrical link to Shakespeare. Scheduled during this first public event held in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre were presentations designed both to entertain the invited guests and to demonstrate how the space would be utilized as part of the Library. Adams provided the principle address, entitled "Shakespeare and American Culture," which provided an example of the scholarly presentations envisioned for the 'Lecture Room.' His address highlighted how Shakespeare's influence in America contributed to the preservation of English culture in the United States. According to Adams, this development was threatened by the influx of foreign influences accompanying waves of immigrants arriving in the United States, beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See James Waldo Fawcett, "Folger Library, Memorial to Shakespeare, Dedicated," *The Washington Post* (24 April 1932); 1 and "Introductory Remarks Made by President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library," n.d. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. My emphasis.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, "Shakespeare and American Culture," *The Spinning Wheel*, vol. 12, nos. 9, 10 (June-July 1932); 229-232.

President Pease's introduction of Adams set the stage for Adams' views by linking the founding of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, the opening of the Horace Howard Furness Shakespeare Library at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and the founding of the Folger Shakespeare Library, all of which occurred on the same date. Pease declared the activities as clear evidence of Shakespeare's enduring ability to "strengthe[n] the solidarity of all English-speaking peoples, both in the British Isles and in the New World."<sup>76</sup> Both went on to link Folger's love of Shakespeare to Emerson, who, like Folger, could trace his lineage back to the time the Puritans landed in America.

Returning to Adams essay, it's notable that he omits the fact that Emily Folger spoke next at the ceremony. Mrs. Folger, who left it to others to link her husband and the Library to Emerson, chose instead to quote from one of William Shakespeare's plays. She was the only one to do so during the entire ceremony, an ironic twist considering it was the founding of the Folger *Shakespeare* Library. Before presenting former Amherst President George A. Plimpton with the keys to the Library, described in the *Washington Post* as "the high point of the occasion," Mrs. Folger spoke a single line from *Henry the Fourth, part one*: "I must you would accept of grace and love the key of our hearts."<sup>77</sup> In one symbolic act of transference, the keys representing the culmination of Henry's and Emily's shared life's work were turned over to a new owner.

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<sup>76</sup> "Introductory Remarks of President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library," n.d. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>77</sup> Emily Folger, "used at Dedication Sh's B'day, 1932," n.d. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. According to the *New York Times*, Mrs. Folger said "I would you would accept with grace and love this key. It is the key to our hearts." See "Folger Memorial Opened by Widow," the *New York Times*, (24 April 1932); 3. The *Washington Post* reported that Mrs. Folger said, "It is the key to our hearts." See James Waldo Fawcett, "Folger Library, Memorial to Shakespeare, Dedicated," *Washington Post* (24 April 1932); 2.

The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* both devoted column space to the Library's founding ceremony, each referencing the story that Emerson was the impetus for Folger's veneration of Shakespeare. Printed a year later, Adams' essay carried forward the story. But what of the mysterious 'friend' who provided Adams with information about Folger's practice of reading Shakespeare "far into the night?" It appears that Adams was quoting Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach's tribute to Henry Folger that appeared in a remembrance collection Emily Folger had printed in 1931 to honor the memory of her husband.

A.S.W. Rosenbach contributed the essay 'Henry C. Folger as a Collector' to the memorial volume. Rosenbach, a famous collector and dealer of rare books from Philadelphia, had befriended the Folgers over the years of their collecting Shakespeariana.<sup>78</sup> Rosenbach, who admired Folger's steadfast commitment to collecting only materials pertaining to Shakespeare, reported that Folger had told him of his practice at Amherst of "reading his favorite plays far in the night."<sup>79</sup> Rosenbach also mentioned Folger's purchase of the *Handy Volume of Shakespeare*, projecting it would "remain one of the most interesting exhibits in the magnificent Memorial Building in Washington." Interestingly, Rosenbach's essay does not mention Folger attending a lecture or reading the essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

However, Rosenbach does mention a practice of Henry Folger's that contributed to his love of Shakespeare – a practice that Joseph Quincy Adams' chose

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<sup>78</sup> Rosenbach helped to build other notable collections in the United States (Henry E. Huntington, J.P. Morgan, Lessing J. Rosenwald) and co-founded with his brother the Philip H. and A. S. W. Rosenbach Museum and Library in Philadelphia, PA. George R. Bodmer, "A. S. W. Rosenbach: Dealer and Collector," *The Lion and the Unicorn* Vol. 22 No. 3 (1998); 277. See also Edwin Wolf II and John F. Fleming, *Rosenbach: A Biography* (Cleveland: World, 1960).

<sup>79</sup> Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach, 'Henry C. Folger as a Collector,' in *Henry C. Folger, 18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930* (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931); 1.

to overlook when preparing his essay on Folger in 1932. In the same sentence that relating Folger's habit of reading Shakespeare's plays late into the night, Rosenbach adds that Folger "would grasp every opportunity to see the performance of the dramas."<sup>80</sup> Similar to President Pease's characterization of Edith Wynne Matthison as a "distinguished interpreter" rather than an actress in his introduction of her, Adams too chose to leave out any reference to theatrical engagement of Shakespeare.<sup>81</sup>

These examples represent the start of a significant and unfortunate trend by Library officials: the act of choosing to view Shakespeare as a literary and historical subject rather than a dramatist. This trend continued to develop over the course of the Library's first forty year existence, fueled by the Folger-Emerson myth – the primary linkage of the founding of the Library with a literary reference – continued well beyond the publication of Adams' essay in 1932.

By early 1933, the Library had completed the transfer of the Folgers' rare materials from warehouses in New York City to Washington, D.C. Far enough along with cataloging the collection to open its doors to researchers, Library officials began contemplating methods of publicizing the Library, again using the Folger-Emerson myth once the Library purchased Emerson's personal copy of Shakespeare. Even Emily Folger may have unwittingly strengthened the Folger-Emerson myth by expressing her desire for the Library to purchase the volume during the summer of

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<sup>80</sup> Rosenbach; 1.

<sup>81</sup> "Introductory Remarks Made by President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library," n.d. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

1932, egging on Adams with phrases such as “[i]t thrills me to hear of the Emerson Shakespeare. Would we might have it!”<sup>82</sup>

After purchase of the volume, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harlan Fiske Stone, Chairman of the Folger Shakespeare Library Committee for the Trustees of Amherst, directed Adams to jointly develop a press release with the *Washington Post* contributor James Waldo Fawcett to publicize the purchase of the Emerson Shakespeare. In a letter to Emily Folger, Adams interprets Stone’s request as intended to “set others to thinking and lead to other visits” to the Library.<sup>83</sup> Included with this letter was a newspaper article from the French edition of *The New York Herald*, entitled “The Folger Shakespeare Library” by William Dana Orcutt, serving as an example of information to be promoted in the press release.

An examination of the Orcutt article, as well as his other works, reveals an interesting dichotomy. Even as Orcutt presents the information that Henry Folger joined a club at Amherst that practiced reading Shakespeare’s plays aloud, Orcutt also presents the Folger-Emerson myth using language as grand as Adams 1932 essay.<sup>84</sup> In 1945, a collection of Orcutt’s essays appeared in print and the Folger-Emerson myth was presented once again. *From My Library Walls: A Kaleidoscope of Memories* contained “Mr. Shakespeare is Established in America,” and presented the anecdote as offered by Adams in 1932, again adding the contradictory facet of the

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<sup>82</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove, L.I. to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 17 June 1932 and 12 July 1932. Folger Collection Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington to Emily Folger, Glen Cove, L.I. 20 June 1934. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>84</sup> William Dana Orcutt, “The Folger Shakespeare Library,” *The New York Herald*, French edition, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



story first provided by A.S.W. Rosenbach – that Folger joined a club at Amherst who met to read the Bard’s plays aloud.<sup>85</sup>

Over the years, this story has been re-told on numerous occasions, continuing into the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 1993, Robert Wedgeworth reiterates the Folger-Emerson myth. In this instance, he assumes that Folger came across Emerson’s Tercentenary address while still a student at Amherst, an allusion first made by Adams in 1932. Wedgeworth described that for Folger, reading the speech “fired him with an enthusiastic appreciation for Shakespeare that never waned.”<sup>86</sup> Others use similarly descriptive terms when writing about Folger’s ‘a-ha’ moment regarding Shakespeare. Stephen Hyslop in 2002 dramatically observed that Emerson’s words “so profoundly influenced Folger that they led to what became his life’s mission – to collect in one place for posterity not only the works of Shakespeare but also the works upon which he drew or that alluded to him, and materials that conveyed the essence of his age.”<sup>87</sup>

Abram Belskie – who assisted sculptor John Gregory in creating the nine bas-reliefs of Shakespearean characters that line the Library’s northern façade – described in 1958 Folger’s interaction with Emerson’s address to the Saturday Club as, “[t]he genesis of the Folger Shakespeare Library may have taken place between the covers of an old magazine. Whether this same magazine is still extant I do not know, but if it

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<sup>85</sup> William Dana Orcutt, *From My Library Walls: A Kaleidoscope of Memories*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., 1945) ; 205-6

<sup>86</sup> Robert Wedgeworth, *World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (Chicago: American Library Association, 1993); 297. Wedgeworth acknowledges that Emily Folger’s love of Shakespeare helped to kindle in Folger a larger passion of the Bard.

<sup>87</sup> Stephen Hyslop, “The Folger Story,” in *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library*, Esther Ferrington, ed. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002); 12. Sandra M. Gustafson incorrectly attributes this essay to Esther Ferrington. See Sandra M. Gustafson, “Eloquent Shakespeare,” *Shakespearean Educations: Power Citizenship, and Performance*, Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans and Mimi Godfrey, eds. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011); 89.

is, it should become the birth certificate of this beautiful building and all that it means.” Belskie’s reference to an ‘old magazine’ appears to be a strange allusion, but help from a scholar’s recent work helps illuminate Belskie’s reference.

In 2011, Sandra M. Gustafson took the bold step of questioning the likelihood of Emerson’s address before the Saturday Club as a substantial influence on Folger. Gustafson points out that, according to her research, Emerson’s speech was not published until 1904 in the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine, decades after Folger had graduated from Amherst. Gustafson instead suggests that Folger had read and been influenced by Emerson’s essay “Shakespeare” from *Representative Men*, first published in 1849.<sup>88</sup> Considering the long evolution of the Folger-Emerson myth, it is surprising that it took this long for such an analysis to be made. A recent warning by Thomas Postlewaite, “the better the anecdote, the better one’s suspicions should be,” could have been applied to this story decades ago.<sup>89</sup> Examining more recent iterations of this Folger-Emerson myth reveals the changeability of its presentation.

The current website of the Folger Shakespeare Library claims that “Henry Folger’s interest in Shakespeare was sparked by a lecture given by Ralph Waldo Emerson that he attended as a senior at Amherst College in 1879.” Mention of the typical second part of this story, that Folger read Emerson’s “On the Tercentenary of Shakespeare’s Birth” is notably absent from the website. This may seem a minor omission, but it is important as it leaves out the crux of the story as first presented by

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<sup>88</sup> Sandra M. Gustafson, “Eloquent Shakespeare,” *Shakespearean Educations: Power Citizenship, and Performance*, Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans and Mimi Godfrey, eds. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011); 89.

<sup>89</sup> Thomas Postlewait, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Historiography*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); 76.

President Pease and Joseph Quincy Adams in 1932: how Folger's 'conversion' to Shakespeare occurred.<sup>90</sup>

In another example of how this story has altered over time, in 2008, Dan Gregory conflated the two Emerson references, claiming "[a]s a young man in 1879 Folger paid 25 cents to hear Ralph Waldo Emerson speak 'On the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's Birth.'"<sup>91</sup> In this instance, part of the story is not only left out, but according to earlier versions, utterly wrong.

Gregory is not the first person to interchange elements of this story. In the 1951 *National Geographic Magazine* article "Folger: Biggest Little Library in the World," Joseph T. Foster confuses the address Emerson presented on the Tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth with Emerson's poem 'Solution' that is inscribed above the fireplace in the Library's Gail Kern Paster Reading Room.<sup>92</sup>

In 1950, Stanley King, former Amherst College President (1932-1946), explained in his *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* that, as a student at Amherst, Folger "spent twenty-five cents to buy a ticket of admission to a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson. The New England philosopher fired him with a love of Shakespeare to which he decided to devote his life." King's rendition of the story suggests a preternaturally quick effect on the young Folger. Considering King's former position influencing the Library, however, it is not necessarily surprising that such a strong influence is awarded to Emerson.

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<sup>90</sup> Sandra M. Gustafson uses the phrase "converted to Shakespeare" when referring to Henry Folger in "Eloquent Shakespeare," *Shakespearean Educations: Power, Citizenship, and Performance*, Coppelia Kahn, Heather S. Nathans, and Mimi Godfrey, eds. (Newark: University of Delaware, 2011); 71.

<sup>91</sup> Dan Gregory, "Devil in the Details: Aerial reconnaissance, the planet Pluto, and Shakespeare," *Fine Books and Collections* 6 No. 4 (No. 34) July/Aug 2008; 27-31.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph T. Foster, "Folger: Biggest Little Library in the World," *National Geographic Magazine* 100, no. 3 (Sept. 1951); 411.

What is so appealing about the Folger-Emerson myth that it is used in so many articles or essays on the Library? The early use of this story by those governing the Folger Shakespeare Library – such as Stanley King and Joseph Quincy Adams – is understandable, given that the story helped legitimize the fledgling institution and forged a material place for the library within a quintessentially American construct. After all, the rare materials collected by the Folgers belonged to an extremely specialized topic, and the depth of their materials – painstakingly collected over forty years of their married life – far outweighed the breadth of the collection. Indeed, the Library’s groundbreaking concentration of materials, while an unparalleled accomplishment, challenged those charged with caring for and running the Library to explain it. Connecting Emerson and Folger validated the American Folger’s pursuit of collecting material produced by and about an Englishman, not to mention founding a repository of his collection of Shakespeariana in the United States capital.

Emerson, referred to as an “authentic cultural voice of America” had called Shakespeare the best dramatist in the world – living or dead.<sup>93</sup> Emerson’s approval and admiration of Shakespeare, along with Emerson’s connection with American literary glitterati, helped to reconcile the seeming incongruent convergence of Folger, American oil magnate and the early modern poet and playwright William Shakespeare. Emerson became a touchstone of sorts, allowing the Library during its early existence to favor treating Shakespeare as a subject of literature and history rather than a dramatist, actor and share-holder in two professional early modern

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<sup>93</sup> Frederick Turner, “Still Ahead of His Time,” May 2003, Smithsonian.com. Viewed 8/5/2010. Available at: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/ahead-of-his-time.html?c=y&page=1>. Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Shakespeare; or, The Poet,” *Representative Men*. Viewed 8/5/2010 Available at: <http://www.emersoncentral.com/shak.htm>

theatres in England. It also helped to make concrete the more than 200 year-old American development of claiming Shakespeare as one of its own.<sup>94</sup>

This story, however, seems a bit too trite and simple an explanation. Why would a self-made man such as Folger – by all accounts independent and pragmatic – dedicate his time and fortune to a sole pursuit merely because he ‘bought into another person’s opinion? Michael Bristol indirectly challenged the cogency of the Folger-Emerson myth in his 1990 *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare* by suggesting Folger’s interest developed from other possible influences: the love of Shakespeare shared by his wife Emily, who worked tirelessly alongside him to collect Shakespeariana, their association with a “cosmopolitan community of book-collectors, scholars, and devotees of Shakespeare both in his text and in performance,” and the close friendship they maintained with Shakespearean scholar and collector Horace Howard Furness.<sup>95</sup> In addition, Bristol’s 2011 chapter on “Henry Clay Folger, Jr.” in volume 9 of *Great Shakespeareans* expands his argument that Folger’s love of Shakespeare can be credited above all to Emily Folger, with whom he shared most of his life. Although Bristol does not go so far as to take on the validity of the Folger-Emerson myth directly, his observations serve to destabilize it.

Another caveat of crucial information rarely coupled with this story may further destabilize it: namely that this origin story comes from Emily Folger – after the death of her husband Henry. Notwithstanding this potential conflict, the information has had a lasting effect on how the Library historicizes itself, including in

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<sup>94</sup> See Esther Cloud Dunn, *Shakespeare in America* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939), Kim C. Sturgess, *Shakespeare and the American Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: the Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

<sup>95</sup> Michael Bristol, *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1990); 71.

one of its recent publication. In her 2007 essay, “Duty and Enjoyment: The Folgers as Shakespeare Collectors in the Gilded Age,” Georgianna Ziegler claims that “[i]t was Emerson who made all of Folger’s brushes with Shakespeare coalesce into a passion that would remain the focus the rest of his life.”<sup>96</sup> Ziegler, the Louis B. Thalheimer Head of Reference at the Folger Shakespeare Library, does include the fact that this story is first provided by Emily Folger and not from Henry Folger himself.

Ziegler’s essay also mentions that Henry Folger liked to copy down quotes about Shakespeare not only from Emerson, but also a myriad of other writers, revealing other possible influences Folger read as a young man, such as novelists and philosophers Thomas Carlyle, Jean Jacques Rousseau and Victor Hugo, to name a few. Ziegler’s essay further develops the literary association of Folger’s love of Shakespeare first introduced by Pease, Adams and King seventy-five years earlier.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, in Michael Bristol’s chapter “Henry C. Folger” in *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespeareans*, analyzes a number of Emerson’s essays noting similarities between Emerson’s sentiments and Folger’s personality.<sup>98</sup>

Perhaps a reason for this story’s viability has been a lack of information from Folger himself pertaining to his devotion to collecting Shakespeariana. Gail Kern Paster, the Library’s Director from 2004 to 2012, has said of discovering Folger’s motives for amassing his Shakespeare collection and founding the Library as, “[i]t’s

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<sup>96</sup> Georgianna Ziegler, “Duty and Enjoyment: The Folgers as Shakespeare Collectors in the Gilded Age,” in *Shakespeare in American Life*, Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2007); 107.

<sup>97</sup> Ziegler mentions that the Folgers decorated their home in Brooklyn with theatrical playbills and pictures of famous actors known for their portrayals of Shakespeare’s characters, but does not consider their appreciation of Shakespeare as a dramatist could have contributed to Folger’s love of Shakespeare. Ziegler; 108.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Bristol, “Henry C. Folger: (18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930),” in *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespeareans* Vol. 9 (New York: Continuum, 2011); 114-195.

really hard to get a sense of his [Folger's] own inner conversation”<sup>99</sup> Access to Folger's inner conversation is impossible of course, but his written correspondences may help to shed light on this subject.

In the fall of 1909, Folger wrote to George Harris, then President of Amherst, and inquired about funding an essay competition at the college. These ‘Shakespeare Prizes’ were announced in the December 20<sup>th</sup> edition of *The Amherst Student*.<sup>100</sup> The competition was open to all students and there were three prizes offered: first place winner would receive \$100, second place winner \$50 and third place winner \$25. Students were to choose from two topics: either a study of *Much Ado About Nothing*, or a study of Shakespeare's art as a writer of comedy.

George F. Wincher of Middle Haddam, CT was the first prize winner of the 1910 Shakespeare Prizes. In July 1910, he wrote directly to Henry Folger, stating, “[i]f this should prove, as I fancy it will, the beginning of a life-long acquaintance with a great author, my debt to you is far past the power of thanks to express.”<sup>101</sup> Wincher's sentiments exactly fit Folger's intent in establishing the prize: to “stimulate the reading and study of Shakespeare in Amherst.”<sup>102</sup>

When introducing the idea of establishing a Shakespeare Prize at Amherst, Folger confessed to Harris that his own interest in Shakespeare began during his

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<sup>99</sup> Eric Goldschiefer, “An Unlikely Love Affair,” *Amherst Magazine*, Fall 2007, Viewed 7/21/2010 Available at: [https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/magazine/issues/2007\\_fall/shakespeare](https://www.amherst.edu/aboutamherst/magazine/issues/2007_fall/shakespeare)

<sup>100</sup> *The Amherst Student*, Monday, December 20, 1909. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>101</sup> George F. Wincher, Middle Haddam CT to Henry Folger, New York, July 1, 1910. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>102</sup> Henry C. Folger to George Harris, Amherst, MA November 6, 1909. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

senior year and “has continued with increasing pleasure ever since.”<sup>103</sup> Taken on its own, this statement would seem to refer to Folger’s exposure to Emerson’s lecture at Amherst. However, Folger clarifies that statement in a letter to Harris five days later, upon receiving a favorable reply from Harris to the suggestion of the Shakespeare prize.

In that letter, Folger explains that a scholarly interaction with one of the Bard’s plays generated his life-long passion, writing, “[m]y own interest in Shakespeare started from writing for a Shakespeare prize, offered at Amherst for only a year or two.”<sup>104</sup> Emerson’s lecture is never mentioned by Folger, nor are the other generally accepted ‘influences’ said to have helped developed Folger’s love of Shakespeare: neither participating in a literary club at Amherst where members read Shakespeare’s text aloud, nor the Handy Volume edition of Shakespeare published by Routledge in thirteen volumes owned by Folger.<sup>105</sup> From Folger himself, we learn that it is his own experience with Shakespeare’s text and literary criticism that serves as the spark to his life-long passion.

Emily Folger shared this story in an address she gave in 1933 to the Meridian Club in New York City, a literary society to which she belonged.<sup>106</sup> She even admits to the ladies at the club that Folger’s irritation with losing the prize greatly influenced

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<sup>103</sup> Henry Folger to George Harris Amherst November 6, 1909. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>104</sup> Henry Folger to George Harris Amherst November 11, 1909. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>105</sup> William Dana Orcutt, *From My Library Walls: A Kaleidoscope of Memories*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., Inc., 1945); 205. A. S. W. Rosenbach, *Henry C. Folger as Collector*, (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931); 1. Rosenbach goes as far as to call Folger’s Handy Volume of Shakespeare “one of the most interesting exhibits in the magnificent Memorial Building in Washington. Folger is said to have read his favorite plays far into the night, despite his demanding class schedule.

<sup>106</sup> Emily Jordan Folger, “Meridian Lecture,” 1933. Folger Collection, Box 37, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



his interest in Shakespeare. The reasons behind Emily Folger's motivation to share this information with the members of the Meridian Club are unclear. Perhaps she expected the audience of women to appreciate a wife's observance of her husband's competitive spirit. Perhaps she was attempting to 'set the record straight' from the rationales previously offered by Library officials. If so, the story never caught fire like the Folger-Emerson myth did.<sup>107</sup>

In Folger's correspondence with Harris, he stresses the idea that the most important result of founding the Shakespeare Prizes is to encourage as many students as possible to engage with Shakespeare as a scholar. Folger mentioned to Harris that he "failed to get" a Shakespeare prize (only offered for a couple of years) while attending Amherst, yet his engagement with the exercise obviously ignited what would one day become an extraordinary passion. Therefore, Folger desired to foster fresh blood into the arena of Shakespeare scholarship, opening the competition to all students at Amherst, not just seniors, as was the stipulation during his time at the college. He even requested that the "original copy of the three successful essays each year be given to me, to be put for preservation in my collection of Shakespeariana."<sup>108</sup> Folger felt his desire to preserve the winning essays would heighten the importance of the competition, which in turn might entice more students to compete.

By 1909, the same year Folger contacted Harris about founding the Shakespeare Prizes, Folger had realized the magnitude of his persistent collecting. In a report to the alumni of his class at Amherst, Folger confesses, "my collection of

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<sup>107</sup> Stephen H. Grant "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem: Creating Washington's Folger Shakespeare Library," *Washington History* Vol. 24 No. 1 (2012); 5. Grant includes this story along with other influences on Folger's appreciation of Shakespeare.

<sup>108</sup> Henry Folger to George Harris, Amherst, November 6, 1909. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Shakespeariana...is probably the largest and finest in America and perhaps the world.”<sup>109</sup> By that time, the Folgers had been collecting Shakespeariana for over twenty years and had, in Folger’s words, surpassed “the life-work of many students during the past one hundred years.”<sup>110</sup> Some of the ‘students’ Folger refers to included J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, who collected materials for Britain’s Earl of Warwick, American theatre manager Augustin Daly and English actor/manager Sir Henry Irving, among many others.<sup>111</sup> Folger’s interesting use of the word ‘students’ to describe those who collected Shakespeariana is a clue of how he continued to view himself – not as a collector of Shakespeare, but as a student of the subject.

This sole reference to “student” is not the only evidence of Folger’s view. In 1915, Folger successfully negotiated the acquisition of the Edwards Shakespeare Collection. When explaining to the owner the reason for collecting this type of material, he explained, “[o]ur collecting has been strictly along the line of gathering material for the use of students, and we hope some day it will be used to advantage.”<sup>112</sup> While ‘students’ is used here to refer to those who Folger envisions to use the collection of Shakespeariana, it is a term that does not necessarily exclude him.

In addition, the original building plans of the Folger Shakespeare Library allocated rooms for the Folgers’ private use when they visited Washington. Because the Folgers had no space available in their own residence for storing their collection,

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<sup>109</sup> *History of the Class of 1879 in Amherst College: From 1904 to 1909*. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>110</sup> *History of the Class of 1879 in Amherst College: From 1904 to 1909*. Folger Collection, Box 39, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>111</sup> Henry Folger to Mrs. Edwards, January 5, 1915. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>112</sup> Henry Folger to Mrs. Edwards, January 5, 1915. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

they never had the opportunity to examine, use and enjoy the materials they purchased. Once bought and delivered, the materials were secured in storage facilities in and around New York City. With the dream of the Library becoming concrete in the late 1920s, Folger undoubtedly envisioned himself and his wife spending extended periods of time in residence in Washington at the Library, researching the collection as any other ‘students.’<sup>113</sup> Folger even clarifies the implication of including any manuscript within the Edwards collection for transfer, even if it seemed to owner “quite insignificant.”<sup>114</sup> Here again, Folger’s reasoning is from the position of a student of Shakespeare, seeing manuscripts as far more important than printed books because, “[a]n original suggestion [in a manuscript], even though it may be simply a hint, may prove some day in the future, to students, of great value.”<sup>115</sup> For Folger, the value of the collection remained to be determined by those who would come into contact with it in the future, how they would use it, what they would create anew from rare materials, some centuries old. His aim in centralizing materials pertaining to Shakespeare was clearly spurred by his desire “[t]o forward the work of imagination in interpreting human nature from age to age.”<sup>116</sup>

All this evidence suggests that Folger and Emerson shared a great appreciation of Shakespeare, but that Folger is not beholden to Emerson for igniting his passion for the Bard. Rather, Folger’s enterprising spirit is responsible for igniting

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<sup>113</sup> Henry Folger, Hot Springs to Alexander Trowbridge, March 7 1929. Box 57, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>114</sup> Henry Folger to Mrs. Edwards, January 5, 1915. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>115</sup> Henry Folger to Mrs. Edwards, 5 January 1915. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>116</sup> George F. Whicher, “Shakespeare for America,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 147 (June, 1931); 768.

a passion for Shakespeare. He may have entered the Shakespeare Prize contest as a means to distinguish himself from his peers, or, given his financial circumstances, for the cash reward promised the winner. Undoubtedly, however, the real prize came to Folger as a result of the act of engaging with Shakespeare as a scholar (though Folger preferred the term ‘student’) – a reminder, perhaps, that one never truly masters a topic studied, therefore allowing the continued engagement of the imagination with what it studies. Folger’s imagination, spurred by a creative rendezvous with Shakespeare, sought to provide others the opportunity to utilize, as he had, materials pertaining to a topic that, for him was a “worthiest function.”<sup>117</sup> Folger never stipulated what type of students he imagined using the collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library, although it is clear that he did not envision the Reading Room of the Library to be open to the general public. Decisions made after his death in 1930 by the corporation of Amherst College included a policy stating what type of readers would be allowed to use the collection, which ultimately followed the policies of another research library, the 1919 Henry E. Huntington Library.

At the 1932 dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Arthur Stanley Pease publicly remarked that he hoped “that within a few months this Library may be ready for serious consultation of use, and that scholars from all the lands in which Shakespeare is honored may resort here for study and research.”<sup>118</sup> Pease’s sentiment certainly squares with Folger’s aim in founding the Library in a city in the United

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<sup>117</sup> Henry Folger as quoted by George F. Whicher, “Shakespeare for America,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 147 (June, 1931); 768.

<sup>118</sup> “Introductory Remarks by President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library, April 23, 1932. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

States: to “help make the United States a center for literary study and progress.”<sup>119</sup> Folger’s journey to finally founding the Folger Shakespeare Library in the nation’s capital turned into a process that lasted over a decade. To get a sense of the careful consideration taken by Folger in his quest for a suitable site, it is useful now to examine the process by which Folger came to choose Washington, D.C. as the home of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

## Section 2: Nationalism and Other Reasons

In *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare* Michael Bristol called Henry Folger’s desire to found the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. a result of “nationalistic sentiments.”<sup>120</sup> Bristol highlights communications between Folger and Dr. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress and Congressman Robert Luce of Massachusetts to support his argument. Folger began communicating with Putnam after reading that Congress was considering passing a bill allowing for allocation of land to erect a second building of the Library of Congress. In his correspondence, Folger confessed to Putnam that he was in the process of purchasing a parcel of land upon which to build the Folger Shakespeare Library.<sup>121</sup> Had the bill passed in its original form, the U. S. government would have stripped Folger of his rights to the land he had been in the process of acquiring for eight or nine years.

Consultation of the letters between Folger, Putnam and Luce reveal that the nationalist sentiments expressed by all parties make up a very small portion of what

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<sup>119</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington, 19 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>120</sup> Michael Bristol, *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1990); 73.

<sup>121</sup> Henry Folger to Herbert Putnam, 19 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

the letters actually discuss. Examination of materials contained within the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library reveals that other considerations besides nationalism came into play when the Folgers were choosing a suitable site for their library building. This section of Chapter One attempts to reconstruct part of the Folgers' journey to the decision to found their library project in Washington, D. C.

Aside from nationalism, an examination of the Folgers' process of narrowing the search for a suitable library site uncovers additional motives, namely financial concerns. Always pragmatic with monetary issues (except for, perhaps, purchasing Shakespeariana), the Folgers continued their practice of fiscal responsibility once entering the process of founding the physical building of their library. Before choosing the site in Washington, D.C.'s Capitol Hill neighborhood to found the Library, the Folgers considered sites in England, Nantucket, Princeton, New York, Brooklyn, among others. Their selection process makes clear that they were very mindful of the potentially lasting impact of the Library, and they desired a site to help realize its promise. In addition, during their forty plus years of collecting, the Folgers had witnessed the break-up and re-distribution of a number of important Shakespeariana collections. Bearing witness to this must have stimulated their desire to ensure their Library's longevity.

Furthermore, Folger employed only limited nationalistic language when communicating with two government servants about retaining his right to use of land in which he owned the title. Slade and Luce referred to the choice of the site in D. C. with nationalistic language, but the Folgers came to choose that site by considering the financial cost, the neighborhood in which the library would sit, and the

constructive social purpose the institution would provide for the community in which it resided before making a final decision.

For example, Folger revealed he considered ‘giving back’ his collection to Shakespeare’s homeland by founding his library in Stratford-Upon-Avon – and Folger had been put under “considerable pressure” to do so.<sup>122</sup> The Folgers had visited Shakespeare’s birthplace numerous times, taking in the local tourist attractions and attending plays at the Stratford Memorial Theatre. Folger had gone so far as to inquire about the cost of land suitable to build his library in Stratford and had been given a quote of \$25,000.<sup>123</sup> However, the Folgers were unimpressed with the condition of the buildings and of the town, and on one of their trips in 1909, Emily Folger commented that “Stratford-on-Avon is oh, so ghastly and poor. The little houses are so smelly and old.”<sup>124</sup> It seems the Folgers, particularly Emily, could not reconcile the thought of coupling the meager buildings of Stratford with the type of majestic library building they envisioned their collection would require. In addition, if the Folgers had founded the library in Stratford it would not have been the only library dedicated to Shakespeare in the small village. The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford, founded in 1879, contained a library and gallery dedicated to the subject of Shakespeare.<sup>125</sup> Placing two Shakespeare libraries in such close proximity would have resulted in a competition for visitors and readers.

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<sup>122</sup> Henry Clay Folger to Herbert Putnam, 19 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>123</sup> Document with real estate sites with estimated cost, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>124</sup> Emily Folger Diary: “Places I Have Visited,” Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>125</sup> Ruth Ellis, *The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, (London: Winchester Publications Limited, 1948); 14.

Beginning as early as 1916, the same year Tercentenary celebrations of Shakespeare's death were conducted across the United States, Folger considered a number of sites in Manhattan and Brooklyn in which to build the Folger Shakespeare Library.<sup>126</sup> New York City, in particular, saw a myriad of events scheduled to commemorate the poet's life and work. The storied Fifth Avenue location of the New York Public Library held a special exhibition of Shakespeareana, as did other public branches, in addition to short programs created by various schools, clubs, leagues, and organizations performed music, dance, poetry, and singing all over the city. Some of these programs were chosen to participate in the festival's capstone performance, the Masque *Caliban by the Yellow Sands* by Percy MacKaye.<sup>127</sup>

The Folgers engaged in various degrees with the celebrations in New York. They regretted having to decline a request to lend materials to a local library branch hoping to display some of the Folger's collection of Shakespeariana, as it was packed away in storage facilities and not easily accessible.<sup>128</sup> The Folgers attended a lecture given by Percival Chubb, President of the National Drama League of the United States, who discussed how plans were shaping up for the nation-wide celebration. On April 25, 1916 the Folgers attended a "Civic Forum" in honor of the celebration at Carnegie Hall where Julia Marlowe, E. H. Sothern and Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree all gave presentations in honor of the Bard. Witnessing the city's response may have prompted their inquiry into a number of possible sites for their library building, all of

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<sup>126</sup> Walker B. Oliver, New York to A. A. McCreary, Toledo 17 December 1916. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>127</sup> "New York Gets Ready to Honor Shakespeare," *New York Times*, (19 March 1916); SM12. Monika Smialkowska, "Shakespeare in History, History through Shakespeare: *Caliban by The Yellow Sands*," *Multicultural Shakespeare: Translation, Appropriation and Performance*, 2007, Vol. 4 (19) ; 17-27.

<sup>128</sup> Henry Folger to H. S. House 31 May 1916 and Henry Folger to Frank P. Hill, 20 March 1916. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



which were located on the upper east side of Manhattan. These included the corner of Fifth Avenue and 88<sup>th</sup> Street – across the street from the future site of the Guggenheim Museum – as well as property across from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (at 83<sup>rd</sup>, 82<sup>nd</sup> and 81<sup>st</sup> Streets) and a plot south of that location at 77<sup>th</sup> Street. Each of these areas would put the Library in a high-profile location, but with hefty price tags that undoubtedly became prohibitive to Folger's scheme. At least two of the areas targeted would have cost Folger \$500,000 to \$550,000 to purchase the land, not to mention the added cost of constructing a building in the largest metropolitan area in the United States.<sup>129</sup>

In the borough of Brooklyn, where the Folgers resided for most of their life together, Folger dallied with the idea of purchasing land near the Brooklyn Public Library in Prospect Park. The price tag for that plot would have cost \$100,000, a great deal less compared to the properties considered in Manhattan, but though construction of the Brooklyn Public Library began in 1912, its completion was postponed until 1941 – a delay which may have deterred Folger's serious consideration of the area for the Library project. However, ultimately the Folgers founded a Shakespeare Memorial in Brooklyn of a different nature that remains open to this day. In 1925, they funded the establishment of the Shakespeare Garden at the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, which delights visitors with the flora mentioned in Shakespeare's writings.

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<sup>129</sup> Document with real estate sites with estimated cost, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

As another possible site for the Library, Folger considered the island of Nantucket, the place where his English forebears settled in America.<sup>130</sup> As an ancestral development, this site for the Library would carry great resonance with Folger. The price for land on the island would have been one of the least expensive sites considered, at \$25,000, but its remoteness may have offset the attractiveness of the price.

Sites in Amherst, Massachusetts and Princeton, New Jersey, each costing \$25,000 and \$50,000 respectively, were considered. These sites were closer to metropolitan areas than Nantucket, yet they would not have been easily accessible to scholars traveling to use the Folgers' collection.

In a 1928 letter to U.S. Representative Robert Luce (R-Mass.), Folger sketched out his choice for Washington, D.C. as the site for the Folger Shakespeare Library. Folger confessed that he had been "importuned by several Colleges and Universities to locate my library of Shakespeariana with them."<sup>131</sup> Undoubtedly Folger's alma mater and Princeton University had made offers to the collector, and Folger's use of the word 'importuned' alludes to his irritation with the numerous offers made for housing his collection by institutions of higher learning. Folger went on to explain to Luce that the nature of his collection, the extremely large volume of books, manuscripts and ephemera coupled with the narrow scope of such items,

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<sup>130</sup> Document with real estate sites and estimated cost, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>131</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Robert Luce, Washington. April 23, 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

would “overbalance a general library on account of its build, its cost, and I hope, its endowment.”<sup>132</sup>

Folger’s keen reasoning alludes to two things: a wish to house his Shakespeariana independently from any pre-existing collection, and a desire to impress Representative Luce with the magnitude of his proposed ‘gift’ to the capital city. Folger admits to Luce that not only will his collection prove of great service but the structure he contemplates building to house his collection will no doubt be an adornment to the Nation’s Capital.<sup>133</sup> This is important because, at that time, Folger was in essence trying to save the desired site for the Library from government expansion of the Library of Congress.<sup>134</sup> Folger’s success in saving the parcel of land from government use speaks to two things: his negotiating prowess and the awe-inducing magnitude of his proposed library project. Though the negotiations between Folger and Congressman Luce will be addressed later, it is briefly mentioned here to underscore the fact that Folger very nearly lost the land he had spent many years acquiring to the Federal Government.

Folger appealing to Luce’s aesthetic considerations proved to be a brilliant tactic. For a number of years, Luce had served on the United States Commission of Fine Arts, a government authority with power to review plans for any sculpture, fountain or monument in any public space in the Capital. Luce had expressed to Folger his desire to use that role to make Washington, D.C. “the most beautiful

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<sup>132</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Robert Luce, Washington. April 23, 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>133</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Robert Luce, Washington. April 23, 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>134</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, New York. May 25, 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Capital in the world.”<sup>135</sup> In addition, two years after exchanging letters with Folger, Luce would introduce to Congress, along with U.S. Senator Henrik Shipstead (R-Minn.), the Shipstead-Luce Act. The Act, still in effect today, stipulates architectural regulations of private and semi-private buildings proposed for construction near federal and district buildings in Washington, D.C. Even though the Shipstead-Luce Act did not become law until 1930, Folger’s library project was forcibly influenced by the general sentiments found in the bill. Though explanation of how the Library project would be altered due to Federal aesthetic stipulations will be addressed in Chapter Two, it is useful here to get a general sense of the state of Washington, D.C.’s development as the nation’s capital.

#### Subsection 1: A Changeable Capital

By the early twentieth century Washington, D.C. was on its way to being the type of capital city first envisioned by the L’Enfant Plan of 1791, after the nineteenth century had proved challenging for the developing city. It suffered such setbacks as the burning of many federal buildings, including the White House and the Capitol Building during the War of 1812. Lack of funding for projects like City Hall and the Washington Monument resulted in drawn-out construction periods.<sup>136</sup> When Charles Dickens visited the capital in 1842, he observed how the wide boulevards and streets developed under L’Enfant’s plan had fallen into disrepair, public spaces intended for future development were overgrown with weeds and any majestic building such as the Post Office, the Patent Office and the Treasury were out of the way of any

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<sup>135</sup> Herbert Luce, Washington to Henry Folger, New York 19 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>136</sup> Joseph R. Passonneau, *Washington through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2004); 44-45.

citizens' convenient use. He rightfully called it the "City of Magnificent Intentions."<sup>137</sup> In addition, as Joseph R. Passaneau has observed, "[t]he city at [the Civil] war's end was primitive even by the standards of the mid-nineteenth century."<sup>138</sup>

In spite of the challenges, the city also experienced the founding of such organizations and buildings during the nineteenth century as the Smithsonian in 1846, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in 1874 and the Thomas Jefferson building of the Library of Congress in 1897. Also in 1874, Frederick Law Olmsted, who designed Central Park in New York, designed a magnificent landscape plan for the Capitol grounds. Coupled with the execution of Jackson Downing's landscape plans for the National Mall, these were the early stages of beautifying and developing Washington that would quickly continue at the turn of the century.<sup>139</sup> In addition, towards the end of the nineteenth century, public works enterprises such as paving of streets, laying brick sidewalks and enclosing open sewers that ran through neighborhoods began the transformation of the city from one of 'magnificent intentions' to 'realized intentions'.<sup>140</sup>

The formation in 1901 of the Senate Park Commission Plan (also known as the McMillan Plan) would greatly promote the civic planning of Washington:

[n]ow that the demand for new public buildings and memorials has reached an acute stage, there has been hesitation and embarrassment in

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<sup>137</sup> Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation*. Chapter VIII, Viewed 8/15/2010 at <http://dickens.thefreelibrary.com/American-Notes-for-General-Circulation/8-1>

<sup>138</sup> Joseph R. Passonneau, *Washington through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2004); 76.

<sup>139</sup> Joseph R. Passonneau, *Washington through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2004); 101.

<sup>140</sup> Joseph R. Passonneau, *Washington through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*, (New York: Monacelli Press, 2004); 81.

locating them because of the uncertainty in securing appropriate sites.

The Commission were thus brought face to face with the problem of devising such a plan as shall tend to restore that unity of design which was the fundamental conception of those who first laid out the city as a national capital, and of formulating definite principles for the placing of those future structures which, in order to become effective, demand both a landscape setting and a visible orderly relation one to another for their mutual support and enhancement.<sup>141</sup>

Over the course of the twentieth-century Washington would be transformed from a haphazardly designed, Victorian-influenced city of brick ‘villages’ to a unified, majestically classical marble capital.<sup>142</sup> Some of the early noteworthy developments resulting from this plan were the re-establishment of the National Mall as a unified public park, the designation of park land at the west end of the National Mall for the Lincoln Memorial and the building of Union Station north of Massachusetts Avenue. This new train station replaced the old train yard, moving the tracks that formerly cut across the Mall to the west side of the Capitol Building. It was during this era of civic consciousness that Emily and Henry Folger happened to find themselves with an afternoon free to spend touring the Nation’s Capital.

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<sup>141</sup> Charles Moore, ed., “The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia,” second edition, *Fifty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Senate Report 166*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); 24.

<sup>142</sup> Charles Moore, ed., “The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia,” second edition, *Fifty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Senate Report 166*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); 7.

The story goes that the Folgers were on their way from New York to Hot Springs, VA in February 1918. They were to vacation at the Homestead, a golfing and warm springs resort that pre-dated the Revolutionary War. On their way from New York their train was delayed in Washington, D.C. With time to spare, they decided to take a tour of the city offered by the Royal Blue Line Company, which was advertised in 1917 as the only tour company in Washington to operate “exclusively eleven and fourteen passenger luxurious pneumatic tired cars, with courteous, gentlemanly, expert guide-drivers and lecturers.”<sup>143</sup> The tour made its way around the neighborhood where the Capitol Building and the Library of Congress sit. As a girl, Emily Folger had lived in Washington, D.C. following her father’s appointment by President Lincoln to the Treasury Department.<sup>144</sup> One can imagine her awe at seeing the city she had known as a child having developed into a unified capital, with the promise of further future development. Undoubtedly impressed with the majestic architecture of the buildings witnessed on Capitol Hill, they began to consider this neighborhood in which to situate their Library.

After making their way to Hot Springs, Folger sent a letter to his real estate representative, A. A. McCreary, with interest in four areas of Capitol Hill, asking him to “[e]nquire very cautiously indeed, to learn in a general way what each would probably cost.”<sup>145</sup> For more than forty years, McCreary had been in the “unique line of business in being the trusted agent” for purchasing land for such clients as

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<sup>143</sup> *Rand McNally Washington Guide to the City and Environs: with Maps and Illustrations*, (New York: Rand McNally & Co., 1917); i.

<sup>144</sup> Stephen H. Grant, “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem: Creating Washington’s Folger Shakespeare Library,” *Washington History* 24 No. 1 (2012); 4.

<sup>145</sup> Henry Folger, Hot Springs, VA to A. A. McCreary, Toledo, OH 11 February 1918. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Standard Oil Co. and Bethlehem Steel Corporation and was known for being discreet.<sup>146</sup> When pressed by a *New York Times* reporter in 1915 about a block of land purchased in upstate New York for an undisclosed client, McCreary revealed, “one of the principal assets in this line [of work] is in being able to hold my tongue...[and] that nobody will know what this land is for until the people I represent are ready to announce it.”<sup>147</sup> Folger highly prized discretion in his endeavors, fearing any mention of his intentions in the press would result in booksellers raising the price of Shakespeariana he sought. Now at the stage of considering the purchase of specific property, Folger could not afford for his plans to be made public for two additional reasons: first, for fear of land owners raising asking prices for their property, and second, for fear of being outbid by investors who would later sell to him at a higher price.

As mentioned above, four areas in the Capitol Hill neighborhood caught the Folgers’ attention, all in very close proximity to the Capitol Building and the Library of Congress, including one site that became the future home of the U.S. Supreme Court Building.<sup>148</sup> Folger even noted to McCreary that three of the sites may not be

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<sup>146</sup> “SAYS WAR HALTS BIG FACTORY PLANT; A. A. McCreary Has Paid Cash for More Than 20 Parcels Near Hudson River. PURPOSE IS KEPT SECRET Enterprise Not Connected with Munitions Manufacture ; - Erection Waits on War's End,” *New York Times* (27 August 1915); 5 and “A Real Estate Specialist,” *Wall Street Journal* (21 December 1918); 2. McCreary died in December 1918 so did not actually broker Folger’s Washington deal. He did travel to Washington early in 1918 at Folger’s request to ascertain an approximate cost of the properties Folger was interested in at that time, the current site of the Folger Shakespeare Library being one of the parcels of land McCreary investigated. When Folger actually began buying the properties on Capitol Hill he contracted the services of attorney Oswald A. Bauer whom McCreary had utilized during his past real estate deals. Henry Folger to O. A. Bauer, Sparkhill, NY 25 March 1924. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>147</sup> “SAYS WAR HALTS BIG FACTORY PLANT; A. A. McCreary Has Paid Cash for More Than 20 Parcels Near Hudson River. PURPOSE IS KEPT SECRET Enterprise Not Connected with Munitions Manufacture ; - Erection Waits on War's End,” *New York Times* (27 August 1915); 5.

<sup>148</sup> As early as 1902 the area north of the Library of Congress was the proposed site for the Supreme Court Building. See Charles Moore, ed., “The Improvement of the Park System of the District of



obtainable.<sup>149</sup> Three of the sites came with an estimated price tag of \$300,000 to \$350,000, but one site was estimated to cost considerably less at \$125,000.<sup>150</sup> That parcel of land, known as Grant's Row and Grant's Folly, was to become the future home of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Captain Albert Grant, a Civil War veteran, bought the land to develop it into residential buildings, but he had miscalculated that the area of Capitol Hill would be a good investment. The areas of Dupont Circle and in west Washington experienced great residential expansion after the Civil War, while the area of Capitol Hill east of the Library of Congress continued to be a less desirable address.<sup>151</sup> The Folgers considered purchasing all of the row houses along East Capitol Street, S.E. between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets.

From 1916 to 1924, they continued deliberating which parcel of land to purchase for the site of their Library. Finally, in the Spring of 1924, they reached a decision. Writing to Oswald A. Bauer, an attorney who had performed legal work for McCreedy's previous real estate transactions, Folger offered asking prices for the proposed Library site on Capitol Hill.<sup>152</sup> Folger estimated the real estate could be acquired for approximately \$240,000 and instructed Bauer to begin purchasing the

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Columbia," second edition, *Fifty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Senate Report 166*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); 38.

<sup>149</sup> Henry Folger, Hot Springs, VA to A. A. McCreary, Toledo, OH 11 February 1918. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>150</sup> Document with real estate sites with estimated cost, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>151</sup> Joseph R. Passonneau, *Washington through Two Centuries: A History in Maps and Images*, (New York: Monacelli Press, Inc., 2004); 124.

<sup>152</sup> "SAYS WAR HALTS BIG FACTORY PLANT; A. A. McCreary Has Paid Cash for More Than 20 Parcels Near Hudson River. PURPOSE IS KEPT SECRET Enterprise Not Connected with Munitions Manufacture ; - Erection Waits on War's End *New York Times* (27 August 1915); 5.

properties.<sup>153</sup> It would take another four and a half years before Folger could gain title to all the parcels of land.<sup>154</sup>

It is unclear why the Folgers waited eight long years before deciding upon the tract of land east of the Library of Congress as the future site of the library. One probable reason was Folger's continued full-time position as President of Standard Oil until his resignation in 1923. Though he would continue to serve as the Board Chairman until 1928, he was relieved from overseeing the day to day operations of the company, freeing him to focus more attention to collecting and founding a library. Other reasons may have included a conclusion to World War I and the emergence from its two subsequent recessions. In addition, a friend of Folger's makes reference to illness Folger suffered during the summer of 1919. Concerned with the longevity of their enterprise, they may have been waiting to see how the Nation's Capital further developed before committing their Library to it. Michael Bristol commented on the intricacies facing the Folgers' philanthropic venture, noting that, "philanthropy is not a simple matter...[w]ealth can't just be given away. It has to be preserved and shaped into a durable institution."<sup>155</sup> After spending a lifetime and a life's fortune to build such an exquisite collection, the Folgers' next logical step would have been to ensure the safe keeping of the collection as far into the future as possible.

Another impetus for moving plans forward in 1924 was the publication of the June 1923 edition of *The National Geographic Magazine*. A copy of this magazine

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<sup>153</sup> Henry Folger, to O. A. Bauer, Sparkhill, NY 15 September 1925. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>154</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Robert Luce, Washington, 23 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>155</sup> Michael D. Bristol, "Henry Clay Folger, Jr.", *Great Shakespeareans: Bradley, Greg, Folger* 9 (New York: Continuum, 2011); 128.

was placed in the Folgers' Shakespeariana collection, evidently by the Folgers themselves. The entire issue is devoted to the nation's capital, its history, development and foreseen expansion and improvement. Charles Moore, who in 1923 was the Chairman of the Commission of the Arts, contributed an article to the magazine, "The Transformation of Washington: A Glance at the History and Along the Vista of the Future of the Nation's Capital." In this article Moore stresses that, "Washington is about to enter upon an era of building comparable to that at the very beginning of its history."<sup>156</sup> Moore even references the recent founding of the Freer Gallery of Art (1923) at the bequest of private collector Charles Lang Freer, a building that would become the first Smithsonian Institute museum dedicated to the Fine Arts. Moore expresses his hope that, "[w]ith reasonable encouragement, many other such gifts might be counted on."<sup>157</sup> It seems that Moore's sentiment spoke directly to the Folgers, enough so that they wished to include Moore's article into their personal collection of Shakespeariana. Five years later Herbert Putnam, the Librarian of Congress, would write that the proposed Library would far surpass the cultural advancement of the country provided by the founding of the Freer Gallery.<sup>158</sup>

Another magazine inserted into the Folger's personal Shakespeariana collection is the February 1925 edition of *Art and Archaeology*. In this magazine is a reprint of a speech delivered to the Artists Breakfast in Washington D.C. in

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<sup>156</sup> Charles Moore, "The Transformation of Washington: A Glance at the History and Along the Vista of the Future of the Nation's Capital," *National Geographic Magazine* 43, No. 6 (June 1923); 569-595; 593. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>157</sup> Charles Moore, "The Transformation of Washington: A Glance at the History and Along the Vista of the Future of the Nation's Capital," *National Geographic Magazine* 43, No. 6 (June 1923); 569-595; 593. Folger Collection, Box 56, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>158</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, New York, 21 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

November 1924 by Jules J. Jusserand, French Ambassador to the United States from 1902-1925. Jusserand was an English Literature scholar and historian, having won the 1917 Pulitzer Prize for History for *With Americans of Past and Present Days*, as well as the only non-American to obtain the office of president of the American Historical Society.<sup>159</sup> His address, “Washington as a Center of Art,” stressed the importance of the beautification of Washington that was underway. He felt that before Washington would attract artists to reside and work in the nation’s capital, it was necessary for the city to be stunningly beautiful and must be populated by supporters of the arts to “play the part of new Medici.”<sup>160</sup> Jusserand comments that another important step for the capital is for the founding of more museums in the city so that artists will have inspirational objects to view to feed their creativity. Interestingly, he stipulates a condition of these museums: that they are not enormous, with an overwhelming number of collections, “but for some museums with works of art either admirable in themselves or providing food for thought.”<sup>161</sup>

It seems that Jusserand was singling out the Phillips Memorial Gallery, (now the Phillips Collection) opened to the public by Duncan Phillips in 1923 in the Dupont Circle neighborhood in northwest Washington. Phillips, who is said to have “helped ignite in Washington an art museum industry,” founded the gallery in 1917 as a means to overcome the monumental grief he experienced after the deaths of his father and brother, who both fought in World War I.<sup>162</sup> In 1923, Phillips opened the

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<sup>159</sup>Elizabeth A. Brennan and Elizabeth Clarage, *Who’s who of Pulitzer Prize Winners*, (Phoenix: Oryx Press, 1999); 534.

<sup>160</sup> Jules J. Jusserand, “Washington as a Center of Art,” *Art and Archaeology* 19 No. 2 (February 1925); 101-105; 104.

<sup>161</sup> Jules J. Jusserand, “Washington as a Center of Art,” *Art and Archaeology* 19 No. 2 (February 1925); 101-105; 104.

<sup>162</sup> Paul Richard, “The Man Who Left a Good Impressionist,” *Washington Post*, (15 March 1999); A1.

doors of his private home three days a week to admit the general public to view his collection of modern art. Phillips expressed intimate sentiments on the act of sharing his private collection with the public, asking “[w]hy not open the doors to all who would come and pass through the portals and share the welcome of art at home, art in its own environment of favorable isolation and intimate contentment?”<sup>163</sup>

It is interesting to note that Folger possessed the same type of sentiments for the researchers who would use his collection. Folger desired the library’s researchers, or ‘readers’ as they are referred to at the Library, to be treated as guests in a private home – that they feel welcome always and duly taken care of by their hosts.<sup>164</sup> Furthermore, the Folgers wished the visitors to the Library, whether readers or the general public, to experience the materials of their collection within a very specific environment – one akin to when Shakespeare lived. This aesthetic awareness of environment is shared by Phillips when he desires visitors to his collection to view art within the comfortably furnished confines of the rooms of his private residence. While viewing at leisure as a guest in one’s home, visitors are able to experience “favorable isolation and intimate contentment.” Phillips confesses to first starting his serious collecting of paintings as a means to “occupy my mind with a large constructive social purpose...I saw a chance...to create a beneficent force in the community.”<sup>165</sup> The Folgers also shared this point of view in founding their Library.

They shared several other views with Phillips, as well. First, their activity of collecting liberated rare materials from small private libraries of England and Europe.

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<sup>163</sup> Paul Richard, “The Man Who Left a Good Impressionist,” *Washington Post*, (15 March 1999); A1.

<sup>164</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington, D.C. 20 December 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>165</sup> Paul Richard, “The Man Who Left a Good Impressionist,” *Washington Post*, (15 March 1999); A1.

At the Library researchers would be able to view a great number of resources in one place without having to travel extensively or acquire the consent of private collectors to view rare materials. Second, the general public would enjoy the exhibits of rare books, paintings, objets d'art and ephemera – all Shakespearean in nature – in the Gallery.<sup>166</sup> The general public would be welcomed to programs designed for the Theatre space as well.<sup>167</sup> While the rare book collection would be available only to qualified researchers, the Folgers wished for the general public to enjoy viewing other parts of the collection they spent most of their lives acquiring. Michael Bristol even observed in his discussion of Folger's nationalistic tendencies that Folger was aware of the, "cultural and spiritual improvement," the Library could offer.<sup>168</sup>

Several considerations led the Folgers to take a bit of a gamble on placing their memorial in Washington, D.C. As noted above, the financial cost of the land played into the Folgers' decision of where to found their memorial. In addition, concerned with the sustainability of their project, the Folgers desired to found it on a protected parcel of land that would contribute to the cultural development of the community and situate it near other libraries and archives that would benefit most the work of scholars. And, though Folger would have been viewed as possessing a 'nationalistic sentiment' for founding the Library anywhere in the United States, he and Emily had a global outlook for their Shakespeare memorial. They intended

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<sup>166</sup> Henry Folger confessed to Alexander Trowbridge that they possessed only a "few real Museum pieces" in the Shakespeariana collection. He noted that "[m]ost of our items are interesting because they are Shakespearian rather than artistic." Because of this he reiterates to Trowbridge that their enterprise is a library first and not a museum. See Letter from Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge 28 February 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>167</sup> The public programs for the theatre space will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>168</sup> Michael Bristol, *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1990); 72.

fellowships to be offered to international scholars to fund travel expenses and other costs associated with conducting research away from one's locale.

Furthermore, Bristol's use of Folger's statement to Herbert Putnam of the Library of Congress – that his “ambition has been to help make the United States a center for literary study and progress” – is actually one of the very few examples that Folger explicitly reveals a nationalistic sentiment.<sup>169</sup> Analysis of their correspondences suggests that Folger used such language because he was hyper-aware of the audience of his writing: both men are government servants who have the nation's (and the developing capital's) interest at heart.

Closer examination of the letters between Folger, Putnam and Representative Luce in the winter and spring of 1928 reveal a gentlemanly cat and mouse game of negotiations. Folger smartly appealed to the nationalistic sentiments of Putnam and Luce essentially to win them over when urging a bill that would exclude Folger's land from Federal acquisition. In essence, Folger desired a strong commitment from the government, in the form of a new law, stating the Grant Row Properties possessed (or soon to be possessed) by Folger would not be overtaken by the government for the use of erecting a new building of the Library of Congress.<sup>170</sup> Putnam and Luce, on the other hand, wanted Folger to announce publicly his intentions for the Grant Row property and submit building plans to the House Committee of the Library of Congress as a show of good faith that Folger would build his Library, as promised in confidence, before a bill protecting the property would be introduced for a vote in

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<sup>169</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington (19 January 1928). Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>170</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington, 19 January 1928, 25 January 1928, 27 January 1928, 16 February 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Congress.<sup>171</sup> Folger, however, who in 1911 witnessed the power of governmental intervention after the Supreme Court found the Standard Oil Company in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act and subsequently ordered the breakup of the company's monopoly, firmly held his ground in these correspondences.<sup>172</sup> While brimming with confidence, his language also possesses a great deal of tact and finesse, elements necessary to insure against alienating or insulting Putnam and Luce.

As a means of forcing Folger's hand in the matter, Putnam communicated to Folger in late January 1928 that Representative Luce would delay consideration of the bill in Committee until Folger was able to make a trip to Washington and formally present his intentions.<sup>173</sup> In his response to Putnam, sent nearly two weeks later, Folger laid out his general plans for the Grant Row property, but did not travel to Washington for a meeting. In his response, Folger stressed that the building erected would be in "complete harmony with the Congressional Library and other Governmental buildings." Folger mentioned again to Putnam the necessity for keeping any announcement about his plans out of the press for book-buying reasons, but then Folger added a new twist to the discussion: stating that if the Grant Row property is appropriated for use by the Library of Congress, he will have no other choice than to find another site for his library outside of the District of Columbia.<sup>174</sup> Interestingly, within two weeks of sending this letter, Folger resigned his

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Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington, 19 January 1928, 25 January 1928, 27 January 1928, 16 February 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Robert Luce, Washington to Henry Folger, New York, 9 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>172</sup> "Henry Clay Folger," National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, 23 (New York: James T. White and Co., 1933); 9- 10.

<sup>173</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, New York 28 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>174</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington, 16 February 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



chairmanship of Standard Oil.<sup>175</sup> It is difficult to say if the negotiations with Putnam and Luce played into Folger's decision to submit the letter of resignation, though certainly once Folger retired he would be free to direct more energy to the actual building of the Library.

Meanwhile, in Washington, Putnam passed on the information contained in Folger's latest correspondence to Representative Luce on February 18. Putnam stressed to Luce that the proposed library "would not merely advance the cultural studies which the [Congressional] Library is endeavoring to promote, but would add to the prestige of the Library itself, and of course, of the National Capital."<sup>176</sup>

Folger's threat obviously resonated with Luce, who within a month advanced the above legislation (H.R. 9355) to the Calendar and House of Representatives Report in mid-March 1928. The parameters of the proposed bill listed the Grant Row property (owned by Folger) as an area excluded from government appropriation.<sup>177</sup> Neither Folger, nor his Shakespearean Library, is ever mentioned, but the exclusion of a proposed real estate venture from the proposed use by the Library of Congress immediately generated "urgent curiosity."<sup>178</sup> Due to the buzz the proposed bill

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<sup>175</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Board of Directors, Standard Oil, New York, 2 March 1928. Folger Collection, Box 41, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. While Folger resigned from his chairmanship on March 2<sup>nd</sup> it was not announced in the press until the end of the month. See "Folger Quits Folger Oil, A Pioneer with Rockefeller," *New York Times*, (31 March 1928); 25.

<sup>176</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Chairman Luce, Washington, 18 February 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>177</sup> House of Representatives, 70<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session, Report no. 938 March 15, 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>178</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, Hot Springs, VA, 23 March 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

created, Putnam and Luce decided to disclose the particulars of Folgers' plans to other Members of Congress and the press on March 23.<sup>179</sup>

Even after his plans were revealed to the public, Folger continued to hold his ground with Putnam regarding the passage of H.R. 9355. Folger firmly stated that he would not begin making plans for the Grant Row property until the bill's enactment. A week later, on the first of April, Putnam wrote to Folger that the bill may not be voted upon until the next session of Congress, but gave Folger assurance against government intrusion on the Grant Row property.<sup>180</sup> Folger obviously did not forego his convictions, because by April 19 Representative Luce wrote to Folger in an attempt to assuage Folger's fears, going so far as to propose that if Folger were to begin building on the Grant Row property, it would "help to expedite the passage of the bill."<sup>181</sup>

Such a development seems to indicate the two parties were at a stalemate. Luce's suggestion to Folger, however, went unheeded by the collector of Shakespeariana. Within four days, on Shakespeare's birthday no less, Folger wrote to Luce that, [s]hould Congress act favorably on the Bill, I will at that time feel very secure in developing the plans for construction."<sup>182</sup> Folger's unwavering fortitude served his plans well, as it was Luce who blinked first, pushing the bill to a vote within fifteen days of Folger's last correspondence. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, the House of

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<sup>179</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, Hot Springs, VA 23 March 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. "Famous Shakespeare Collection for Capital," *Washington Post*, (23 March 1928); 1.

<sup>180</sup> Herbert Putnam, Washington to Henry Folger, New York, 1 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>181</sup> Robert Luce, Washington to Henry Folger, New York 4/19/1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>182</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Robert Luce, Washington, 23 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. My emphasis.

Representatives passed H.R. 9355, followed by the Senate's passage on May 17<sup>th</sup> – in both chambers by unanimous consent – and with President Coolidge's signature five days later. Disaster averted, Folger could safely contemplate building plans for his Library in earnest, confident in his ability to realize his desire to found an institution with an ensured longevity.<sup>183</sup>

With a site secured, the Folgers could begin to focus on the details of their memorial – which as described earlier would house a library for qualified scholars, a gallery for enjoyment by the general public and a theatre space for public programs – would begin to take shape on paper by the end of 1928. But before venturing forward in time, another topic must be considered if an investigation is to be attempted into what prompted the Folgers to include an Elizabethan-style theatre in their plans.

Although the Folgers moved within the same social circles of the Rockefellers they did not participate in events of high society. Instead, they preferred to spend their free time with, as Michael Bristol describes, “a lively and cosmopolitan community of book-collectors, scholars, and devotees of Shakespeare both in his text and in performance.”<sup>184</sup> Examining how the Folger's engaged in theatrical performance reveals they did so not only as spectators but as critics and scholars as well.

### Section 3: The Folgers and The Theatre

What influences drove the Folgers to create a theatre space within a private research library separate from the reading room reserved for qualified Shakespearean scholars? Why create a place intended for the general public to engage with the Bard

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<sup>183</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Herbert Putnam, Washington, 25 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>184</sup> Michael Bristol, *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (New York: Routledge, 1990); 71.

as a dramatist? What influenced their decision to model their theatre after examples of performance spaces from early modern England? The Folgers had spent their life together buying an unprecedented amount of Shakespeariana and founded a library intended to further the study of Shakespeare's life and work; this was sufficient explanation for their allocation of room within the Library for scholarly lectures and discussions. At the same time, building a theatre for an audience of almost three-hundred, equipped with dressing rooms and professional stage lighting equipment, suggests it would also be used for the staging of plays – and not just any plays, but as evidence suggests, those by Shakespeare presented in original practices productions.<sup>185</sup> To begin the discussion it is first necessary to introduce Emily Clara Jordan Folger, the equally influential figure also responsible for shaping the Folgers' Shakespeare memorial.

#### Subsection 1: Emily Clara Jordan Folger

Most sources that are devoted to the biography of the Folgers tend to focus most of its attention on Henry Folger, making it a challenge to fill in the gaps of Emily Folger's biography. The Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library contains many boxes filled with memorabilia from Emily Folger's life – scrapbooks from her time at Vassar College, diaries devoted to describing theatrical performances and literary lectures attended, as well as speeches and articles she wrote on literary subjects. From these keepsakes treasured by Emily Folger, her life story, as told by her, threads itself together.

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<sup>185</sup> See Chapter Three for a discussion of evidence supporting the Folgers intention to stage productions of plays in the Theatre.

The mundane biographical details of her life are easily gleaned. Emily was the “daughter of Edward Jordan, who was solicitor of the Treasury Department during the administrations of Presidents Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant.”<sup>186</sup> Her mother, Augusta Woodbury Ricker Jordan was bore Emily Jordan in Ironton, OH in 1857. The family resided in Washington, D.C., at 12<sup>th</sup> and M streets northwest, during her father’s appointment as solicitor, thereafter residing in Elizabeth, New Jersey.<sup>187</sup> Emily had two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary and a brother, Francis.

Emily Jordan attended Vassar, like her sister Mary before her, from 1875 to 1879. In December of her sophomore year, Vassar’s theatre society, Philaethea, elected Emily Jordan to join their group.<sup>188</sup> Within six months she appeared in the comedy *Everybody’s Friend* in the role of Fanny.<sup>189</sup> Jordan did not restrict her enjoyment of theatre to the Vassar campus, however. In February 1878, at the age of twenty-one, she attended a production of Bulwer’s *Richelieu* at Edwin Booth’s theatre in New York, experiencing Booth’s “noble and splendid type of imaginative power” at work in the title role.<sup>190</sup>

While at Vassar, Jordan was the subject of two original poems, both untitled and quite playful in nature. The first, dated June 22, 1878, reads,

One’s love for Miss Jordan  
Is somewhat accordin’

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<sup>186</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, “Folger Library Called Gem of Architecture,” *Washington Post*, (23 April 1932); MS2.

<sup>187</sup> “Emily C. Folger Funeral Rites Set for Today: Widow of Standard Oil Leader Helped Found Shakespeare Library,” *Washington Post* (23 February 1936); 7.

<sup>188</sup> Ms. Gray, Secretary of Philaethean Society, to Emily Jordan, 5 December 1876. Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>189</sup> Chapter Alpha program, Friday, 1 June 1877. Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>190</sup> Theatre Program, [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. “The Drama: Edwin Booth as Richelieu Niblo’s Garden: *New York Tribune* (5 February 1878); 5.

To the length of time since you met her.  
If a sidereal year,  
You need have no fear  
You will like her still better and better.

The second poem, undated, lightheartedly pokes fun at Jordan's names,

With my views it's according  
To prize highly, Miss Jordan;  
Few are richer & rarer  
Than Emily Clara,  
Her head is clear & her logic the same,  
But when it comes to rhyming  
I don't like her name.<sup>191</sup>

Though unidentified, the author – or authors – of the poems were likely a classmate or a particular faculty member at Vassar.

Also contained within the keepsakes in Jordan's scrapbooks from this period is an article, "Notes on the Satellites of Saturn" from the *American Journal of Science and Arts* published in June of 1879.<sup>192</sup> An inscription appears on the article, "Miss Jordan with love from Maria Mitchell," the article's author. In addition to teaching astronomy at Vassar, Maria Mitchell (1818-1889) had the distinction of becoming the

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<sup>191</sup> From Emily Folger's Scrapbook, Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>192</sup> Maria Mitchell, "Notes on the Satellites of Saturn," *American Journal of Science and Arts* (June 1879); 430-2. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

first female faculty member that was hired at the school and the first woman to be invited to join the American Academy of Arts and Science. She was the first professional female astronomer in the United States, and was awarded a gold medal by King Edward VI of Denmark for discovering the ‘Miss Mitchell’s Comet’ at the age of 29. Mitchell also was an advocate of women’s rights and a distant cousin of Henry Folger.<sup>193</sup>

In the fourth line of the first poem, above the use of the word ‘sidereal,’ the “time required for one complete revolution of the earth about the sun, relative to the fixed stars, or 365 days, 6 hours, 9 minutes, 9.54 seconds in units of mean solar time,” suggests the poet was an attendee at Mitchell’s ‘Dome Parties.’<sup>194</sup> Held the week before Vassar’s commencement, Mitchell hosted these events in celebration of the closing school year and her students’ accomplishments. Mitchell, who possessed an affinity for rhyming poetry, frequently drafted these types of verses about her students and invited her students to do the same for this annual event.<sup>195</sup> Mitchell was an “extraordinarily gifted teacher,” renowned for appreciating her students’ “spontaneity and truth arrived at through individual observation.”<sup>196</sup> She also encouraged her female students to “view themselves as independent thinkers with

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<sup>193</sup> Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, “Maria Mitchell: The Advancement of Women in Science,” *The New England Quarterly*, 51, no. 1, (March 1978), 39-63; 39. Michael Bristol, “Henry C. Folger: (18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930),” in *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespearians* 9 (New York: Continuum, 2011); 145.

<sup>194</sup> William Morris, Ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1976. For an account of Mitchell’s ‘Dome Parties’ see: “A Dome Party: Breakfasting in the Vassar Observatory with Maria Mitchell” *Hartford Daily Courant* (2 October 1882); 1.

<sup>195</sup> Henry Albers, *Maria Mitchell: a life in journals and letters* (Clinton Corners: College Avenue Press, 2001); 187.

<sup>196</sup> Pamela Annas, “Maria Mitchell,” *The Radical Teacher*, No. 30 (January 1986); 21.

skills and intelligence fully equal to those of men.”<sup>197</sup> Mitchell also regularly exposed her students to the demanding rigors of field research – an unusual practice even at male colleges at that time – in an effort to provide her students with a rational way of problem solving as well as “a unique intellectual challenge [that] could help women escape the narrowness of their lives.”<sup>198</sup>

Mitchell was a favorite teacher of Jordan’s at Vassar. As a future chair of the Maria Mitchell Endowment Fund, Jordan helped secure a \$50,000 benefaction in 1893, fulfilling Maria Mitchell’s desire for the Vassar Astronomy Department chairmanship to be independently funded.<sup>199</sup> However, this accomplishment is not what Jordan chose to memorialize in her scrapbook, choosing instead to save for posterity Mitchell’s scholarly article from the *American Journal of Science and Arts*, suggesting Jordan’s deep appreciation of Mitchell’s pioneering work in the field of science as a woman.

Mitchell’s article is an orderly presentation of her careful observations while researching the satellites orbiting Saturn. In studying Mitchell’s work, Jordan experienced the importance of meticulous organization, persistence and consistency when working as a researcher. Years later, Emily Folger would spend her days carefully researching booksellers’ catalogues to highlight for her husband those items of Shakespeariana of greatest significance and rarity. She also would catalogue their purchases as they came into the Folgers’ possession, an act that would greatly serve the future work of the Library’s administrators when developing its card catalog.

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<sup>197</sup> Michael Bristol, *Henry C. Folger, Jr.*: (18 June 1857 – 11 June 1930),” in *Bradley, Gregg, Folger: Great Shakespeareans* Vol. 9 (New York: Continuum, 2011); 145.

<sup>198</sup> Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, “Maria Mitchell: The Advancement of Women in Science,” *The New England Quarterly*, 51, no. 1, (March 1978); 41-2.

<sup>199</sup> “Alumanae Lunch,” *The Vassar Miscellany*, Vol. 23 (Vassar College, 1893); 398.



During her senior year, Jordan served as President of her class. Honoring her talents for rhetoric and public speaking, Jordan presented a lecture with another classmate (Miss Hakes) at her Commencement on June 25, 1879, titled “Should the Northern or the Southern Colonists of this Country Command Greater Respect?”<sup>200</sup>

Jordan, like her sister Mary, pursued a college degree at a time when women were admitted to American colleges in greater numbers than ever before. Patricia Albjerg Graham discussed this development in her article “Women in Academe,” explaining the trend may have resulted from falling male student enrollments during to the Civil War.<sup>201</sup> During this period, Matthew Vassar founded Vassar College in 1861 because, “[i]t occurred to me that woman, having received from her creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development.”<sup>202</sup> As a result, Jordan had the privilege to receive a top-notch education at Vassar, the Queen of the College world.<sup>203</sup> According to Graham, “[w]ell into the 20<sup>th</sup> century the single-sex colleges of the East remained the prestigious places for young women to be educated.”<sup>204</sup> The following whimsical poem from a Vassar newsletter illustrates how seriously, as well as good-naturedly, students at Vassar took their studies:

In Winter I get up by night

To dig and grind by candlelight;

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<sup>200</sup> Vassar Commencement Announcement, 25 June 1879. Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>201</sup> Patricia Albjerg Graham, “Women in Academe,” *Science*, New Series 169, No. 3952 (Sept. 25, 1970); 1284.

<sup>202</sup> Article from Vassar Publication, [ n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>203</sup> According to the Vassar College song, *Our Alma Mater*. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>204</sup> Graham, 1284.

In Summer just the other way,  
I sit up then till break of day-  
I have to sit and dig-and, more,  
To listen to my roommate snore,  
And wish above all else that I  
Upon my downy couch might lie.  
And when exam time comes – ah me!  
And I'm as sleepy as can be,  
Although night drops her gentle pall  
I do not go to bed at all.<sup>205</sup>

An incident illustrating how much this generation of women appreciated their education occurred at Christmas during Jordan's last year at Vassar, when she received a gift from her older sister Mary Augusta Jordan. By Emily's senior year, Mary Jordan was working as a librarian at Vassar after her own 1876 graduation from the institution.<sup>206</sup> Her sister presented Emily Jordan the gift in a small robin-egg-blue box from the jewelers Tiffany & Co. Inside were receipts for four hundred dollars, paid by Mary Jordan, for Emily Jordan's tuition for her final year at Vassar. Lining the box is a material that looks like synthetic white fur. Pasted to the box's bottom is

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<sup>205</sup> Article from Vassar Publication, [ n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>206</sup> Vassar Graduation Program, 1876. Folger Collection, Box34 Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

a card that reads “A Happy Christmas for you.”<sup>207</sup> Clearly, Mary Jordan equated the value of education with that of fine jewelry.

In August of 1879, less than two months after graduating from Vassar, Emily Jordan learned from Mary S. Woodbury of an open position at the Nassau Institute, an all-female preparatory school in Brooklyn.<sup>208</sup> Jordan interviewed for the position and was quickly hired to head the Collegiate Department; she began teaching Literature in the fall of 1879.<sup>209</sup> Jordan continued to attend the theatre during this period. On the evening of April 17, 1880, she attended a ‘double-bill’ of *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew* starring Edwin Booth as Shylock and Petruchio.<sup>210</sup> Booth’s wife Marion Booth appeared in both productions as Nerissa and Kate. On April 23, 1884 Emily Jordan attended a performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* given by the Kemble Society at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.<sup>211</sup> The society was dedicated to honoring the memory of English actor and manager John Philip Kemble.<sup>212</sup>

During the six years between graduating from Vassar and marrying Henry Folger, Jordan kept a busy social calendar. Of the many invitations to social events during this period, including weddings, dances, and socials, there are a number of

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<sup>207</sup> Available in the Folger Collection, Box 34, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>208</sup> Mary S. Woodbury, New York to Emily Jordan 1 August 1879. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>209</sup> Program from Nassau Institute listing Faculty at opening of classes, 15 September 1880. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>210</sup> Program to *The Merchant of Venice* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, Booth’s Theatre, 17 April 1880. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>211</sup> Program to *Much Ado About Nothing*, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 23 April 1884. Box 36, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington and “Musical and Dramatic Notes,” *New York Times*, (20 April 1884); 8.

<sup>212</sup> “In the Honor of Kemble,” *New York Times*, (30 September 1883); 2.

invitations from the Charles Pratt family. It is through this family that Jordan met her future husband, Henry Clay Folger.

#### Subsection 2: Sharing Shakespeare

As early as May 31, 1882, Folger, Jordan and a daughter of the Pratt family belonged to an informal literary society, the *Irving Literary Circle*. In these meetings, the topic of Shakespeare appeared ever present. During one of the group's meetings, they discussed a selection from Emerson's *Essay on Nature*, "Shakespeare; or, the Poet." According to a program dated June 7, 1882, the group took an excursion to Sands Point, Long Island. The program for their meeting lists Emily Jordan as "Our President," Henry Folger as "Our Circle" and in a hand-written addition, Miss Pratt as "Our Transportation Master."<sup>213</sup> Jordan's service as President of the Society illustrates her commitment to academic as well as social pursuits after college. Out of the eleven members of the Circle, only Folger and Jordan include quotes from Shakespeare next to their names, an allusion to the project they would spend most of their adult lives pursuing. Folger draws from *As You Like It*, "O wonderful, wonderful and most wonderful!/ And yet again wonderful, and after that out of all whooping."<sup>214</sup> Jordan chose a quote from *Othello*, "[f]or I am nothing if not critical."<sup>215</sup> The Shakespearean quotes chosen by Folger and Jordan reflect their

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<sup>213</sup> "Irving Literary Circle Third Annual Excursion, Wednesday, June 7, 1882. Sand Point, Long Island," program. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>214</sup> *As You Like It*, Act three, scene two, line 191 in G. Blackmore Evans, Ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974); 385.

<sup>215</sup> *Othello*, Act two, scene one, line 119 in G. Blackmore Evans, Ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974); 1213.

respective personalities, Folger as good natured and amiable and Jordan as logical and precise.<sup>216</sup>

Emily Jordan and Henry Folger married on October 6, 1889 and with their marriage, she ended her teaching career. During that same year, Folger gave his wife a copy of the Halliwell-Phillips facsimile of the *First Folio of 1623*. Inscribed on the copy Folger wrote, “[h]ere you may see Shakespeare’s plays as they were actually given to the world.”<sup>217</sup> Many years later, after successfully moving up the ranks of the Charles Pratt Company and Standard Oil, Folger bought the original of the First Folio from which Halliwell-Phillips had made the reproduction.

Five years after they married, Emily Folger returned to the realm of Academe to pursue her Master’s Degree.<sup>218</sup> In the late nineteenth century, a woman of Emily Folger’s social class continuing her education, let alone a career, after marriage was rare. Yet, with the establishment of a number of all-female colleges in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century, women began to widen their focus of possibilities outside the domestic sphere.<sup>219</sup> The Folgers were part of a trend, occurring during the nineteenth century, when “the divorce rate remained less than one percent of all marriages...[and] the fertility rate during this same period was cut

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<sup>216</sup> Samuel Parkes Cadman “The funeral service, Henry C. Folger: prayer and discourse” *Henry C. Folger, 18 June 1857-11 June 1930* (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931); 23 and Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 8.

<sup>217</sup> Orcutt, 206-7.

<sup>218</sup> In *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account* (Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1948), Emily Folger is listed as receiving her Master’s Degree before marrying Folger, which is incorrect. A copy of her degree is available in the Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>219</sup> Catherine Clinton and Christine Launardini. *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century*, ( New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); 198.

in half.”<sup>220</sup> The Folgers, for whatever reason, did not have children, and this development may have given Emily Folger impetus to return to her studies to pursue a Master’s Degree.

Emily Folger’s graduate school interests of Shakespearean studies culminated in a Master’s Thesis on the topic of the true text of Shakespeare. The phrase ‘true text’ refers to Shakespeare’s *First Folio of 1623*. Her thesis, housed in the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library, records and deciphers the variations contained in the printings of the First Folio. Her writing synthesizes previous critics work and concludes that the First Folio is the version of Shakespeare’s plays that should be regarded definitively as his best work.<sup>221</sup>

Dr. Horace Howard Furness served as one of her advisors on the writing of her Master’s thesis. Dr. Furness, a noted Shakespearean scholar and a collector of Shakespeariana, became friendly with the Folgers through their mutual interest in Shakespeare.<sup>222</sup> Furness is best known as editor of the New Variorum of Shakespeare, an effort that placed him at “the head of Shakespearean scholars.”<sup>223</sup> James M. Gibson mentions Furness’ close social relationship with the Folgers in his book *The Philadelphia Shakespeare Story: Horace Howard Furness and the New Variorum Shakespeare*. At the onset of Emily Folger’s endeavors in graduate study, Furness praised her for choosing a subject for her Master’s thesis that would ultimately aid her husband’s interest in collecting Shakespeariana.<sup>224</sup> From this time

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<sup>220</sup> Catherine Clinton and Christine Launardini, *The Columbia Guide to American Women in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000);129.

<sup>221</sup> Emily Clara Jordan Folger, “The True Text of Shakespeare” (Thesis: Vassar College, 1896).

<sup>222</sup> Furness donated his collection of Shakespeariana to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

<sup>223</sup> Agnes Repplier, “Horace Howard Furness” *The Atlantic Monthly* 110 (1912) 624-8; 624.

<sup>224</sup> James M. Gibson, *The Philadelphia Shakespeare Story: Horace Howard Furness and the New Variorum Shakespeare*, (New York, AMS Press, 1990); 185.

forward, the Folgers were frequent guests in the Furness home until his death in 1912. Furness was well known in many social, theatrical and literary circles and enjoyed hosting many social gatherings that frequently included such literary icons as Henry James, Thackeray, Dickens and Tennyson.<sup>225</sup>

### Subsection 3: Live Performance and Shakespeare

While the Folgers spent most of their time together amassing the largest collection of Shakespeariana in history, they also enjoyed attending the theatre. What is interesting about their attendance to so many performances is how they left evidence of their activities. Within the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library are boxes containing ticket stubs and programs collected by the Folgers from their attendance to theatrical performances. Beginning as early as 1906, Emily Folger even began writing in a diary titled “Plays I Have Seen,” in which she recorded varying comments such as her or others’ reactions to the production, the audience size and who attended the performance.<sup>226</sup> Strangely, however, this area of the Folgers’ lives has received practically no attention by scholars to date.<sup>227</sup> This section of Chapter One will begin to fill this absence by discussing the type of theatrical performances witnessed by the Folgers, paying particular attention to those Shakespearean performances that followed some degree of original practices. The final portion of this section will present an examination of the relationship between Ben Greet and Henry Folger as evident in correspondences between the two.

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<sup>225</sup> James M. Gibson, *The Philadelphia Shakespeare Story: Horace Howard Furness and the New Variorum Shakespeare*, (New York, AMS Press, 1990); 247.

<sup>226</sup> Emily Folger’s diary, “Plays I Have Seen,” Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>227</sup> Stephen H. Grant, “Emily Jordan Folger,” *Vassar Encyclopedia*. Viewed 8/02/2010 Available at: <http://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/alumni/emily-jordan-folger.html>

Interestingly, in a box containing the earliest ticket stubs and programs of theatrical performances witnessed by the Folgers is a ticket to “Good Night Sweet Prince,” the memorial service of the great American actor, director and manager Edwin Booth on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1893. Tickets to this event were given away first to those who worked in the theatre industry with Booth, with any remaining tickets given to individuals of prominence in society.<sup>228</sup> For the Folgers to have secured a ticket to this event speaks to their admiration of Booth.

While the Folgers attended theatre in Manhattan, they also frequented Brooklyn establishments. The Montauk Theatre (later renamed Col. Sinn’s Montauk Theatre), established on September 16, 1895 by William E. Sinn, became a theatre the Folgers visited with regularity. The proprietor, Sinn (and later his daughter Isabel Sinn-Hechts after Sinn’s death in 1899) touted the Montauk as “the Elite Theatre of Brooklyn.” The theatre, an investment venture shared by Daniel Frohman and Al Hayman, was made successful by booking such stars as Julia Marlowe in *As You Like It* in 1899, E. H. Southern in *Hamlet* in 1901, comedic actor Stuart Robson in *The Comedy of Errors* in 1903, Henry Irving in *Waterloo* in 1903, and Viola Allen in *Twelfth Night* in 1904 and *The Winter’s Tale* (playing both Hermione and Perdita) in 1905.<sup>229</sup> While a professional theatre cannot make an entire season out of these stars’ performances, they are mentioned here as performances witnessed by at least one of the Folgers.

The Folgers visited the Columbia Theatre in Brooklyn (also directed by William E. Sinn until his death in 1899) as early as May 27, 1899 to witness Maude

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<sup>228</sup> “In Memory of Edwin Booth,” *New York Times*, (14 November 1893); 8.

<sup>229</sup> Programs to these productions may be found in Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



Adams, William Faversham and James K. Hackett in *Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>230</sup> The Folgers had seen this production before when it opened in Manhattan at the Empire Theatre on May 8, 1899.<sup>231</sup> Also at the Columbia Theatre, under the direction of the Greenwall Theatrical Circuit Company one of the Folgers would see productions of *As You Like It* (1902), and the husband and wife team of R. D. McLean and Odette Tyler starring in the roles of Shylock, King John, Portia and Prince Arthur respectively in *The Merchant of Venice* and *King John* (1903).<sup>232</sup>

The earliest production in the 1890s witnessed by one of the Folgers occurred on January 4, 1892. It was a production of *As You Like It* at Daly's Theatre in Manhattan.<sup>233</sup> Theatrical great Ada Rehan played Rosalind, George Clarks played Jacques and John Drew played Orlando. The Folgers would see Ada Rehan more than ten years later, in January 1904, as Kate in *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Lyric Theatre.<sup>234</sup> The play would follow Augustin Daly's treatment of the text, with the inclusion of the induction and re-arrangement of scenes.<sup>235</sup> On April 13, 1894 one of the Folgers visited Daly's Theatre again, this time to see a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>236</sup> One of the Folgers went to two productions at

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<sup>230</sup> Ticket Stubs and program to *Romeo and Juliet*, Columbia Theatre, May 27, 1899. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>231</sup> Programs to *Romeo and Juliet*, Empire Theatre. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>232</sup> Program to *As You Like It*, Columbia Theatre, Week of Monday December 2, 1902, Program to *Merchant of Venice*, Columbia Theatre, Week of Monday March 2, 1903 and Program to *King John*, Columbia Theatre, Week of March 9, 1903. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>233</sup> Program ("Daly's Bill") to *As You Like It*, Daly's Theatre, January 4, 1892. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>234</sup> Ticket Stubs to *The Taming of the Shrew*, Lyric Theatre, January 18, 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>235</sup> Ticket Stubs to *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Lyric Theatre on January 18, 1904. Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>236</sup> Program ("Daly's Bill") to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Daly's Theatre, April 13, 1894. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Abbey's Theatre in Manhattan under the direction of Abby, Schoeffel and Grau. On April 16, 1894, they attended a production of Alexander Dumas' adaptation of *Hamlet*, a "[d]rama in Ten Tableaux," starring Monsieur Mounet-Sully and Mademoiselle Segond-Weber of the Comedie Francaise, and during the week of December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1895 they attended a production of *Macbeth* starring Henry Irving, Ellen Terry and the London Lyceum Theatre.<sup>237</sup> The last production of the nineteenth century the Folgers attended was at the Empire Theatre, with Maude Adams and William Faversham as the star-crossed lovers in *Romeo and Juliet*, with James K. Hackett as Mercutio, beginning on May 8, 1899.<sup>238</sup> This production was Adams' first appearance as Juliet after studying the role for over a year.<sup>239</sup>

The Folgers would see E. H. Southern's debut as Hamlet in New York at the Garden Theatre on September 17, 1900. The production would employ a cast of 21 and extras in number "[n]ot less than 100."<sup>240</sup> The Folgers would go on to attend many of Southern's productions in the future, as well as lectures by Southern after his retirement from acting. In October, 1904 they went to the evening performance of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Knickerbocker Theatre, the New York premiere of Julia Marlowe and Edward Southern's famous partnership that would end in 1923 with Marlowe's retirement from the stage. Between 1906 and 1911, the Folgers attended at least fourteen Shakespearean productions starring Southern and Marlowe, more productions than starring any other actors. At *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1911,

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<sup>237</sup> Program to *Hamlet*, Abbey's Theatre, Monday Evening April 16, 1894 and Program to *Macbeth*, Abbey's Theatre, Week of Monday December 16, 1895. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>238</sup> Programs to *Romeo and Juliet*, Empire Theatre. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. "Maude Adams as Juliet," *New York Times*, (9 May 1899); 7.

<sup>239</sup> "Maude Adams as Juliet," *New York Times*, (9 May 1899); 7.

<sup>240</sup> *New York Times* (13 September 1900).

Emily Folger noted with great pleasure that much more of the text than usual is spoken during the performance and for this she calls it, “[a] great rejoice.”<sup>241</sup> She also noted that the Bianca subplot is cut a great deal and the Induction was not included in the production. While in this instance, Emily Folger praised the textual work of Southern and Marlowe’s production, Henry Folger commented negatively on their production of *Macbeth* in 1910. Interestingly, both comments refer to their desire to hear the entire text of the play during a performance. Emily Folger wrote, “Dick is distressed that the elocution of all makes the audience lose some of the drama. Not one word should be lost, of course.”<sup>242</sup>

On October 8, 1900 one of the Folgers would see a preview of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* starring Louis James as Bottom and Kathryn Kidder as Helena at the Grand Opera House.<sup>243</sup> The Folgers would visit the Garden Theatre at Madison Square Garden three times in 1900; first, to see Richard Mansfield in a revival of “Shakespeare’s Immortal War Play King Henry V” on October 3. They would return to see the same production almost two months later on November 24. Approximately a month later on December 26, 1900 they would witness at the same theatre Sarah Bernhardt’s farewell tour of America, performing in Hamlet.

The Folgers saw three productions by the Henry V. Donnelly Stock Company at the Murray Hill Theatre, all of them by Shakespeare: in November 1902, a

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<sup>241</sup> “*Taming of the Shrew* Southern and Marlowe Shubert Fulton St. Bklyn [sic],” *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 38. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>242</sup> “*Macbeth* Southern and Marlowe, B’Way [sic] Theatre March 27, 1906,” *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 38. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Emily Folger often refers to Henry Folger by the name Dick in her diary, a nickname she gave him derived from his playing the part of Dick Deadeye in Gilbert and Sullivan’s *H.M.S. Pinafore* at Amherst College.

<sup>243</sup> Program to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Grand Opera House, 8 October 1900. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; in May 1903, a production of *Othello*; and in March 1904 a production of *As You Like It*.<sup>244</sup> In 1903 the Folgers saw a number of interesting productions in Manhattan. At the Irving Place Theatre they witnessed the famous German actor Ferdinand Bonn as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* on January 5<sup>th</sup> before playing the title character in *Richard III* on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Both productions were performed in the German language, and Bonn performed each play only twice during his two month engagement in the United States.<sup>245</sup>

The Folgers also traveled to Mrs. Osborn's Playhouse – located on 44<sup>th</sup> Street near Fifth Avenue – in January and February of 1903 to see two Shakespearean productions, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. While these productions did not receive particularly good reviews in the *New York Times*, the productions were nonetheless a novelty for the New York stage.<sup>246</sup> Mrs. Osborn's Playhouse, previously known as the Berkley Lyceum, had opened only a few months before, in October 1902.<sup>247</sup> Josefa Nielson Osborn, a prominent New York socialite, had made a name for herself as a designer of women's dresses by the time she ventured into the theatre business.<sup>248</sup> The theatre received an extensive remodeling, with the aim of making it a playhouse for an exclusive clientele. While designing

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<sup>244</sup> Program to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Murray Hill Theatre, 24 November 1902. Folger Collection, Box 11, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Program to *Othello*, Murray Hill Theatre, Week of 4 May 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Program to *As You Like It*, Murray Hill Theatre, Week of Monday 7 March 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>245</sup> "Three Offerings at Broadway Houses," *New York Times*, (15 February 1903); 25 and "Plays for the New Year," *New York Times*, (28 December 1902); 8.

<sup>246</sup> "Shakespeare in the Ark," *New York Times*, (28 January 1903); 9 and "Second Play as in Queen Elizabeth's Time," *New York Times*, (3 February 1903); 9.

<sup>247</sup> "Mrs. Osborn's Playhouse," *New York Times*, (19 October 1902).

<sup>248</sup> "Mrs. Osborn Dies of Appendicitis," *New York Times*, (12 November 1908).

dresses for polite society was a success for Osborn, her venture into producing theatre quickly failed.

In 1903, she leased the theatre to Frank Lea Short who “reproduced on the stage the interior of the old Swan Theatre of London, of about the year 1609.”<sup>249</sup>

Short was first introduced to Elizabethan staging in 1895 when he was a pupil at the Empire Theatre Dramatic School.<sup>250</sup> Short participated as an actor in Franklin Sargeant’s production of Ben Johnson’s *Epiocene or The Silent Woman* that was staged in New York and on the Elizabethan stage of the Sanders Theatre at Harvard.<sup>251</sup> His new venture, inspired by Ben Greet’s production of *Everyman*,<sup>252</sup> was developed by consulting with “Professor [William Lyon] Phelps,... of Yale; Barret Wendell of Harvard and Frederick Carpenter of the University of Chicago.”<sup>253</sup>

Short’s directing efforts fell flat with the *New York Times* who colorfully described the production of *Romeo and Juliet*:

...this reproduction of the Swan Theatre was outraged by a perversion of Shakespeare more ferocious than is usually perpetrated in behalf of our modern ‘productions’ in which the scenes of the Poet are crushed

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<sup>249</sup> “Mrs. Osborn’s Playhouse Reopened with Shakespeare,” *New York Times*, (25 January 1903); 33.

<sup>250</sup> After graduation Short was an instructor at the Empire Theatre Dramatic School. See Jeannette L. Gilder, “Miss Gilder’s New York Letter,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1 February 1903); 35.

<sup>251</sup> “Shakespeare in the Ark,” *New York Times*, (28 January 1903); 9. Sargeant directed a production of *Twelfth Night* in the Elizabethan manner in February 1903 at the Empire Theatre starring the pupils of the Empire Dramatic School. See “Shakespeare Given in His Own Way,” *New York Times*, (21 February 1903); 8. For more on the production of *The Silent Woman* at Harvard in 1895 see Christopher Scully, “Constructed Places: Shakespeare’s American Playhouses” (Dissertation: Tufts University, 2008); 178-89.

<sup>252</sup> Jeannette L. Gilder, “Miss Gilder’s New York Letter,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1 February 1903); 35.

<sup>253</sup> “Theatrical Incidents and News Notes: Miss Shaw Airs Her Views On...” *New York Tribune* (18 January 1903); A3.

into distorted fragments by the appurtenances and impertinances [sic]  
of solid scenery and many changes of costume.<sup>254</sup>

Short used approximately fifteen actors to stage the production and approximately twenty actors to perform as an Elizabethan audience watching the production. The *Times* critic found fault with the size of the theatre, which held less than two hundred people, claiming it became a distraction watching the number of people and properties maneuvering around one another during the performance. Short also came under fire due to the large number of cuts made to the script and rearranging scenes of the play. Given that Short used the ‘bare stage’ of the Swan Theatre on which to stage his production, the *Times* critic felt it should, “enable us to give the text entire in its proper order and with the rapid continuity calculated to produce the effect of dramatic narrative.”<sup>255</sup> *Much Ado About Nothing* fared a little better in the *Times*. However, while the reviewer thought the production did not offer a credible amount of authenticity to the original practices production, he did comment that, “[a]s a curiosity it is distinctly worth seeing, and it is neither unamusing [sic] nor entirely ineffective considered as a play.”<sup>256</sup> Short had planned more productions by Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the Elizabethan manner, but the unfavorable reviews of his project forced him to end the experiment. He closed the productions during the second week of their run and abandoned the project.

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<sup>254</sup> “Shakespeare in the Ark,” *New York Times*, (28 January 1903); 9.

<sup>255</sup> “Shakespeare in the Ark,” *New York Times*, (28 January 1903); 9.

<sup>256</sup> “Second Play as in Queen Elizabeth’s Time,” *New York Times*, (Feb. 3, 1903); 9.

In March of 1903, the Folgers attended Ben Greet's production of *Everyman* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Brought to the United States by Charles Frohman, the production followed William Poel and the Elizabethan Stage Society's production of *Everyman* as presented in 1901.<sup>257</sup> The Folgers would attend this production of *Everyman* on three other occasions. First, they saw the production again at a benefit performance of the Packer Jubilee Fund on May 18, 1903, with the production's proceeds benefitting the all-female collegiate prep school, the Packer Collegiate Institute.<sup>258</sup> A year later the Folgers would attend another performance of *Everyman*, this time on April 4, 1904 at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. Again, Greet was at the helm of the production, naming the troupe – which included Edith Wynne Matthison – the 'Original English Company.' The Folgers attended this production again at Association Hall in Brooklyn.

In the program for this performance appeared a letter from Horace Howard Furness, dated December 10, 1902, to the editor of Philadelphia's *Public Ledger*. In the letter Furness fervently appeals to lovers and students of literature, drama, history and theology to see this production of *Everyman* and by not doing so "ought to be a life-long regret to all thoughtful minds."<sup>259</sup>

Frohman and Greet's venture with the 'bare stage' production of *Everyman*, with Wynne Mathison in the title role, stirred the New York

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<sup>257</sup> Program to *Everyman*, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 24 March 1903. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Ben Iden Payne notes that Poel "maintained Greet had...stolen his production of *Everyman*." See Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in the Wooden O; Memoirs of the Theatre* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977); 91.

<sup>258</sup> Program to *Everyman*, 18 May 1903. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>259</sup> Program to *Everyman*, Association Hall, Brooklyn, April 4, 5, 7, 8. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

theatre audience's desire to see this company perform one of Shakespeare's plays.<sup>260</sup> Frohman would arrange for the company to do an 'open air' performance of the forest scenes of *As You Like It* to benefit the University Settlement Kindergarten on Thursday afternoon, May 14, 1903.<sup>261</sup> This would be the only time Emily Folger would attend an open air performance by Greet's company, possibly explained by an entry in her diary after attending an outdoor production of Frank Benson's *As You Like It* in 1910 at Stratford Upon Avon – when she commented, “[o]f course the acting wasn't fine. How can it be out of doors?”<sup>262</sup>

A year later, in 1904, the Folgers attended a performance of *Twelfth Night* by the Ben Greet Players in the “Elizabethan Manner” at the Knickerbocker Theatre.<sup>263</sup> The production, presented by Charles Frohman and directed by Ben Greet, opened on February 22, 1904 and starred Edith Wynne Mathison as Viola and Greet as Malvolio.<sup>264</sup> The program from this production includes an explanation of the company's use of the “Elizabethan Manner” in which the production was staged, illuminating how Greet interpreted mounting theatrical production influenced by the Elizabethan Revival movement:

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<sup>260</sup> “To Play Shakespeare: Wynne Mathison and Greet Company to Appear for a Benefit,” *New York Times*, (3 April 1903); 9.

<sup>261</sup> Program to “The Forest Scenes of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*,” 14 May 1903. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>262</sup> “A.Y. Like It [sic] S-on-A [sic] August 3, 1910 Benson Company out of doors,” *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 11. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>263</sup> Program for *Twelfth Night*, 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>264</sup> “The Elizabethan Twelfth Night: Ben Greets Dream of a Shakespearean Production,” *New York Times*, (23 February 1904); 5.



It is obvious that the mode of producing the plays of Shakespeare in the 16<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries can only be reflected to a limited extent in a modern theatre. An adequate representation of an Elizabethan theatre, such as the Swan, in construction, open at the top; the rear of its stage lined with tiers of boxes, in which sat as many of the “quality” as were not actually seated upon the stage; a trumpeter standing at the door of a balcony above the stage the “groundlings” in the pit – these and similar traits could only be revived in a theatre especially constructed for the purpose. The present production, therefore, has mainly an educational design: to attain something of the original literary or “Shakespearian” atmosphere by reviving as much of the Elizabethan style as is congruous in a modern theatre; to do justice to the poet’s text by giving it in its entirety so far as that is possible without offending modern tastes; to exalt Shakespearian text above Shakespearian setting; to pursue a middle way between an antiquarian revival and the modern style of presenting a maximum of stage setting with a minimum of Shakespeare; in short, to give such a representation of the play as occurred at Middle Hall, on February 2d, 1601 (the first recorded performance of “the last of the joyous comedies”), and to depart from but one important Elizabethan custom, that of having the female roles taken by boys.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Program to Knickerbocker Theatre, 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

This is one of the earliest examples where the Folgers encountered an original practices production of Shakespeare produced by a successful company.

Henry Folger was so impressed with Greet's productions that he wrote to Greet in May 1904 expressing his gratitude for the chance to see their work. In his letter Folger singled out Edith Wynne Mathison's work in the company, writing, "I thought my vocabulary of adjectives exhausted in her praise, but her Beatrice, with its grace of movement and beautiful elocution so full of *nuance* she is wonderfully winning. She seems by right to be the successor of Ellen Terry." Folger also shared some advice with Greet on establishing a successful repertory season in New York:

But perhaps nothing is so striking as your versatility. If you would establish yourselves for a winter in some New York theatre, giving a cycle of plays in quick succession, and then repeat varying the order, you would astonish the town and carry it by storm. We must see your "Taming of the Shrew" and of course you play "The Tempest," and I hope "Macbeth." It seems to me to have been written for you and Miss Mathison.<sup>266</sup>

Further appreciating Greet's treatment of Shakespeare, in March of 1904 the Folgers visited Daly's Theatre five times to see productions starring Ben Greet, Edith Wynne Mathison and "Greet's Elizabethan Company."<sup>267</sup> The weeks of March 14 and March 21 in particular were busy ones for Edith

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<sup>266</sup> Henry Folger to Ben Greet, 28 May 1904, Folger Collection, Box 24, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>267</sup> "This Week at the Theatres," *New York Times*, (13 March 1904); 8

Wynne Mathison, as she played the lead roles in seven performances of *As You Like It* and three performances of *Everyman*. The Folgers were undoubtedly impressed with Mathison's portrayal of Rosalind, for over the course of those two weeks they sat through four performances of *As You Like It*.<sup>268</sup> The *New York Times* would tout this production of *As You Like It* as Mathison's first appearance in New York City in a modern production of the play.<sup>269</sup> During the week of March 28, the Folgers attended the Tuesday evening production of *She Stoops to Conquer* at Daly's Theatre with Greet playing Tony Lumpkin and Mathison as Kate Hardcastle.<sup>270</sup> This production's opening had been postponed a week due to the success of *As You Like It*. Reportedly, Andrew Carnegie wrote an article praising the Shakespearean production, which helped bolster ticket sales.<sup>271</sup>

Later in the Spring of 1904, one of the Folgers attended the Ben Greet Players production of *Twelfth Night* on May 14, 1904 at the People's Institute.<sup>272</sup> The Folgers would attend and purchase nineteen programs from the Vassar College benefit performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* by The Woodland Players (under the direction of Ben Greet) presented at the Tuesday

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<sup>268</sup> Program to *As You Like It*, Daly's Theatre, Week of Monday, March 21, 1904 and Ticket Stubs to *As You Like It*, Daly's Theatre, Evening of March 15, Evening of March 17, Afternoon of March 26 and Evening of March 26, 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>269</sup> This Week at the Theatres," *New York Times*, 13 March 1904; 8.

<sup>270</sup> Program for *She Stoops to Conquer*, Daly's Theatre, Week of March 28, 1904 and Ticket Stubs to *She Stoops to Conquer*, Daly's Theatre, Evening of Tuesday March 29. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>271</sup> "Notes of the Stage," *New York Times*, 18 March 1904; 2.

<sup>272</sup> Program and Ticket Stub for *Twelfth Night, or What you Will*, "People's Institute, 14 May 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Club on May 23, 1904.<sup>273</sup> The next day the Folgers attended another production by Greet's company at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences; this time, the production would be the forest scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Greet appearing in both of these productions as Benedick and Bottom, respectively.<sup>274</sup> While Greet's company would take on different names, it contained essentially the same actors from his production of *Everyman*.<sup>275</sup>

The Folgers attended Forbes-Robertson's production of *Hamlet* at the Knickerbocker Theatre three times in 1904: on March 7, March 31 and April 2.<sup>276</sup> The Folgers saw Forbes-Robertson in both *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* in 1913, and in her diary Emily Folger calls his Shylock an "impersonation out of genius," and his Othello the "20<sup>th</sup> Century Othello – excelling for its kind."<sup>277</sup> From his engagement as Hamlet in New York in 1904, Forbes-Robertson would accept the Harvard English Department's invitation to perform *Hamlet* on their reconstructed Elizabethan stage in Sanders Theatre.<sup>278</sup>

Charles Shattuck notes in *Shakespeare on the American Stage: From Booth and Barrett to Southern and Marlowe* that this momentous occasion, where a

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<sup>273</sup> Programs from *Much Ado About Nothing*, The Tuesday Club, 23 May 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>274</sup> Programs for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Department of Philology, Season of 1903-1904, 24 May 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>275</sup> "Shakespeare in Open Air," *New York Times*, 6 June 1904; 2.

<sup>276</sup> Programs and Ticket Stubs to *Hamlet*, Knickerbocker Theatre, March 7, 1904, March 31, 1904 and April 2, 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>277</sup> "*Merchant of Venice* Forbes Robertson November 29, 1913," *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 47 and "*Othello* Forbes Robertson Shubert Theatre December 15, 1913," *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 48. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>278</sup> John Corbin, "Topics of the Drama," *New York Times*, 10 April 1904; SM2.

company of professional actors played upon an early modern theatre reconstruction for the first time in the United States, stirred great appreciation by the audience; without the conventional use of scenery and properties, the humanity of the play was brought to the forefront.<sup>279</sup> Interestingly, Ben Greet traveled to Cambridge to see Forbes-Robertson's production on the reconstructed Elizabethan stage, though he possessed qualms in regards to the production's use of large scenic pieces and numerous properties from Forbes-Robertson's "scenic production."<sup>280</sup> Greet was well known for his 'bare stage' and open air productions that only scantily used either theatrical device.<sup>281</sup> Yet, the *New York Times* review of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* in New York called it "the one truly great Hamlet of the modern stage," and noted that the simple scenery was shifted quickly.<sup>282</sup> While it appears Forbes-Robertson's production of *Hamlet* incorporated much less scenery than other scenic productions of the period, Greet disagreed with the use of Forbes-Robertson's scenery on the Sanders reconstructed stage. Greet, who followed much of William Poel's attempts at original practices productions, would have been of the same opinion as Poel's in regards to original practices. Poel, when discussing the founding of the Elizabethan Stage Society in *Shakespeare in the Theatre* writes,

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<sup>279</sup> Charles Shattuck, *Shakespeare on the American Stage: From Booth and Barrett to Southern and Marlowe*, Volume 2 (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1987); 204.

<sup>280</sup> John Corbin, "Topics of the Drama," *New York Times*, 10 April 1904); SM2. Greet also disagreed with the alternation theory employed in the production, stating that the drawing of the Swan Theatre showed no employment of a traverse or curtain.

<sup>281</sup> Richard H. Palmer, "The Professional Actor's Search for a College Audience: Sir Phillip Ben Greet and Charles Coburn," *Educational Theatre Journal* 21 No. 1 (March 1969); 52, "D'Orsay's New Comedy," *New York Times*, 12 March 1907); 9 and John Corbin, "The Sceneless Ben Greet," *New York Times*, 28 February 1904); SM4. See also Winifred F. E. C. Issac, *Ben Greet and the Old Vic; a biography of Sir Philip Ben Greet* (London: 1964 or 5).

<sup>282</sup> "The Great Modern Version of *Hamlet*," *New York Times*, 8 February 1904); 9.

The Elizabethan Stage Society was founded with the object of reviving the masterpieces of the Elizabethan drama upon the stage for which they were written, so as to represent them as nearly as possible under the conditions existing at the time of their first production – that is to say, with only those stage appliances and accessories which were usually employed during the Elizabethan period. “Everything,” said Sir Walter Scott, “beyond correct costume and theatrical decorum” is foreign to the “legitimate purposes of the drama,” and it is on this principle that the work of the Society is based.<sup>283</sup>

While this discussion of Forbes-Robertson’s treatment of *Hamlet* on the Sanders Theatre stage at Harvard, and Greet’s reaction to it, may seem tangential to a discussion of the Folgers’ engagement with theatrical productions, it is important for two reasons. First, it exemplifies the dissonance of opinions regarding the interpretation and treatment of original practices productions. These differing opinions would complicate the design process of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in the late 1920s, which will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Second, while the Folgers greatly admired Forbes-Robertson’s work, it is Greet’s productions that receive the Folgers’ appreciation for Shakespeare’s text spoken well in performance. Emily Folger commented favorably on Greet’s production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1907, reflecting in her diary that, “[t]he text

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<sup>283</sup> William Poel, *Shakespeare in the Theatre*, (London and Toronto: Sidgwick and Jackson, LTD., 1913); 203-4.

is so completely spoken it is a great joy. Every point comes out.”<sup>284</sup> This will be pertinent to the topic of the intended use of the Folger Shakespeare Theatre and Emily Folger’s attempt to found a school of elocution at the Folger Shakespeare Library, covered more in-depth in Chapter Three.

The large number and vast array of performances the Folgers attended help to illustrate the Folgers’ appreciation for Shakespeare in live performance. In addition, the evidence of the various original practices productions witnessed by the Folgers exemplifies the fact that they were not only aware of such productions, but were greatly interested in these types of productions – particularly those of Ben Greet’s company. This interest led the Folgers and Greet to exchange friendly correspondences for over thirty years, beginning as early as 1904, when Greet wrote to Henry Folger thanking him for his letter which contained congratulations on the success of a recent production.<sup>285</sup> In November 1905, Greet had dinner with the Folgers at their invitation, a sign of their great interest in Greet’s work.<sup>286</sup> In 1906, Greet wrote to Folger appealing to his ability to drum up some patrons to their current production.<sup>287</sup> When planning the bookings of his acting company around the United States, Greet wrote to Folger asking for his financial assistance with the scheme.<sup>288</sup> While it is unclear whether Folger contributed to Greet’s scheme, it is most likely he

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<sup>284</sup> “*Merchant of Venice*. Ben Greet Co. Garden Theatre March 9, 1907,” *Plays I Have Seen*, Diary of Emily Folger; 74. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>285</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 31 March 1904. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. The production was probably *As You Like It* at Daly’s Theatre which the Folgers attended over four times in a two week period.

<sup>286</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 30 November 1905. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>287</sup> Ben Greet to Henry Folger, New York, 2 January 1906.

<sup>288</sup> Ben Greet, Los Angeles to Henry Folger, New York, January 6 [illegible year]. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

did not since Folger tended to be solely focused on spending money in order to grow his collection.

In 1914, Ben Greet found himself faced with a wonderful opportunity: he had been asked to serve as the Stage Director for the proposed Edwin Booth Memorial Theatre.<sup>289</sup> Greet appealed to Folger in a letter written in January of that year, asking for his help with funding the enterprise citing that the “chief productions will be Shakespeare’s plays.”<sup>290</sup> The *New York Times* had announced the plans for the theatre in November 1913, to be built somewhere in the vicinity of Columbus Circle with an auditorium that would seat over 1,500 patrons.<sup>291</sup> Greet informs Folger that the venture will not be a theatre only for the well-to-do, but that, “[s]pecial provision will be made from the outset, for the intelligent but poorer members of the community, and for the growing boys and girls as well as young folks.”<sup>292</sup> Greet had proposed such a “National Shakespeare Theatre” for the United States as early as 1911, hoping the theatre would open by 1916 in observance of the Tercentenary Celebration of Shakespeare’s death.<sup>293</sup> With the opportunity facing him from the proposed Booth Memorial Theatre, it would seem Greet’s plan would come to fruition, though somewhat differently than he envisioned.

It appears Folger did not reply to Greet’s letter right away, for nearly two months later Greet wrote to Folger again, this time with a tone of near-desperation. Greet appealed to Folger a second time for financial support, stating that even if the

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<sup>289</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 8 January 1914. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>290</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 8 January 1914. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>291</sup> “Ready to Build Booth Memorial,” *New York Times*, 23 November 1913; C7.

<sup>292</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 8 January 1914. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>293</sup> “Greet would found Shakespeare House,” *New York Times*, 23 April 1911.



theatre building's construction is postponed past the new year, "we want to begin something before the year is out then get the theatre afterwards."<sup>294</sup> Folger, however, was not interested in investing in the venture. On March 6, 1914, he responded to Greet, politely declining the request, writing, "I am much too busy to spare any time, and my Shakespeare purchases are using all my means. I bought more than I had planned, and I seem to be facing for the current year some large investments."<sup>295</sup>

However, it is possible there was more to the story. More than fourteen years later, Folger would insist on a theatre space included within the plans for the Folger Shakespeare Library, seemingly saving his time and money for that venture rather than contributing to the founding of another theatre.<sup>296</sup> Ben Greet also passed on the opportunity provided him by the Edwin Booth Memorial Theatre plan, and by the end of 1914, he returned to his home country of England to serve as a director of primarily Shakespearean productions at the Old Vic in London until 1918.

Perhaps if the Folgers had actively supported Shakespearean productions before the founding of the Library, they may have acquired insight into what was required to effectively draft a plan for theatrical productions to have been produced before the founding day exercises of the Library in 1932. But they chose, instead, to appreciate Shakespeare as a dramatist from the audience side of the footlights. Although the Folgers were aficionados of Shakespearean performance, at that point, their focus essentially remained on collecting Shakespeariana.

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<sup>294</sup> Ben Greet, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 3 March 1914. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Greet's emphasis.

<sup>295</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Ben Greet, New York, 6 March 1914. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>296</sup> Henry Folger also declined Arthur Goodrich's inquiry to contribute to Walter Hampden's proposed Shakespeare repertory in New York City in 1923. See Letter from Arthur Goodrich, New York to Henry Folger, New York, 10 May 1923 and Letter from Henry Folger, New York to Arthur Goodrich, New York 14 May 1923. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

In the spring of 1927 Ben Greet sent Henry Folger an advertisement of his production of *Twelfth Night* performed on Shakespeare's birthday at Rudolf Steiner Hall in London.<sup>297</sup> While the majority of Greet's Elizabethan productions of Shakespeare employed women in the female roles, in this instance he used a full cast of men for *Twelfth Night*, with the company split into the "the Men" and "the Boys."<sup>298</sup> Folger graciously accepted Greet's gift, thanking him for the effort to send the notice, and particularly that it contained a hand-written greeting from Greet. Folger admitted he would happily include this notice in his "Shakespeare Collection" and wished Greet great success on his production.<sup>299</sup>

In late April 1932, Greet would send a telegram expressing gratitude on behalf of the Ben Greet Companies to "Henry Clay Folger's wonderful gift to his countrymen of the Shakespeare Library and Theatre."<sup>300</sup> Greet would be one of the few individuals to recognize the importance of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre and Folger's Shakespeare collection to any theatre practitioner, let alone one interested in early modern staging practices.<sup>301</sup> Sadly, had Folger collaborated with Greet on his Elizabethan productions, rather than simply being an appreciative audience member, the Folger Elizabethan Theatre might have been utilized as a performance space much

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<sup>297</sup> Advertisement to *Twelfth Night – What You Will in the Elizabethan Manner with Music of the Period*, Rudolf Steiner Hall, London, 23 April 1927. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>298</sup> Advertisement to *Twelfth Night – What You Will in the Elizabethan Manner with Music of the Period*, Rudolf Steiner Hall, London, 23 April 1927. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>299</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Ben Greet, London, 29 April 1927. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>300</sup> Western Union Cablegram from Ben Greet Players, New York to Henry Folger. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>301</sup> Greet donated to the Folger Shakespeare Library a "phonograph record of lines read by him in a production of *As You Like It*, and, with it, photographs of the Ben Greet Players at the Deanery, Canterbury, and Northam Hall, Essex, in 1931." See: *Report of the Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library for the Year Ending June 30, 1933* ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 20.

sooner. Regrettably, the partnership never formed, perhaps playing a role in the forty-year delay of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre's regular use for theatrical performances.

An analysis of the Folgers' appreciation of the theatre, particularly those productions of Shakespeare's plays, offers a new reading of the Folgers' intentions when building the Folger Shakespeare Library. For the Folgers, founding "a dwelling place for Shakespeare" in America meant conceiving of an institution that could actively engage with the study of Shakespeare in production. Chapter Two will discuss the challenges encountered by the Folgers when designing and building the Theatre and Library.

## Chapter 2: The Folger Shakespeare Theatre Architecture and the Elizabethan Revival Movement

The worldwide Elizabethan Revival movement saw renewed interest in the architecture of English early modern theatres and how those playing places were used in performance, significantly influencing the Folgers' design plans for their Library project. In *The Shakespeare Revolution*, J. L. Styan observes that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when Henry and Emily Folger were amassing their huge collection of Shakespeariana and planning the founding of their research library, serious scholarship of "paramount importance" was finally undertaken in the area of rediscovering the Elizabethan theatre, both of the theatre buildings themselves as well as the production practices of companies during Shakespeare's time.<sup>302</sup> Herbert Berry observed in 1976 that between the years 1882 to 1923, "people studied and wrote about the playhouses with energy unparalleled before or since."<sup>303</sup> Muriel Clara Bradbrook deftly explains the importance of this type of scholarship, clarifying that "the drama differs from other literary forms in that it has a further modifying influence, the contemporary conditions of presentation, to which it is even more closely and inevitably related," and that, "[i]t is only when the various conventions of stage, actor and playwright can be accepted automatically that knowledge reacts fruitfully upon interpretation."<sup>304</sup> As Ronald Vince has proposed, "studies [of Elizabethan theatre] must in the final analysis center on the primary styles and

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<sup>302</sup> J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); 41.

<sup>303</sup> Herbert Berry, "Americans in the Playhouse," *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976); 32-33.

<sup>304</sup> M. C. Bradbrook, *Elizabethan Stage Conditions: A Study of their Place in the Interpretation of Shakespeare's Plays*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932 – Reprint Aylesbury: Hazell Watson and Viney Ltd., 1968); 1, 6.

conditions of performance.<sup>305</sup> This interest in the Elizabethan theatre, coined as the Elizabethan Revival movement by Robert Speaight, saw attempts at recapturing its early modern ephemeral nature and for decades influenced many.

The earliest beginnings of the Elizabethan Revival movement can be traced back to the eighteenth century to Edward Capell, an editor of Shakespeare's works, who in 1767 was the first to call for an examination of the performance practices and material conditions of Shakespeare's playhouse. More than twenty years later, scholar Edmond Malone published a significant discovery of the "Alleyn-Henslowe papers at Dulwich Library."<sup>306</sup> In 1836, Ludwig Tieck, with architect Gottfried Semper, designed a two-dimensional reconstruction of the Fortune Playhouse based on the Fortune Contract.<sup>307</sup> In 1840 at the Düsseldorf Theater, a production of *Twelfth Night* incorporated the use of a stage, built with specific Elizabethan features.<sup>308</sup>

It is important to acknowledge the contribution of knowledge of the Elizabethan theatre and its conventions made years later, as J. L. Styan has, from the discovery of the drawing of the Swan Theatre in 1888 by Karl Theodor Gaedertz and the publication of Henslowe's *Diary and Papers* between 1904 and 1908 by W. W.

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<sup>305</sup> Ronald Vince, *Renaissance Theatre: A Historiographical Handbook*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984); 131.

<sup>306</sup> C. Walter Hodges, "The Recovery of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Playhouses," in *Shakespeare Text, Subtext, and Context*, Ronald Dotterer, ed., (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1989); 59.

<sup>307</sup> C. Walter Hodges, *Enter the Whole Army: A Pictorial History of Shakespearean Staging 1576-1616*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); 11.

<sup>308</sup> Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); 35.

Greg.<sup>309</sup> Gaedertz's publication of the Johannes DeWitt's drawing of the Swan Theatre and *Observationes Londoniniensis* set many scholars to work explaining how Elizabethan playwrights meant their plays to be staged in this type of theatre.<sup>310</sup> DeWitt's Swan Theatre drawing was met with skepticism by some scholars, as Herbert Berry has noted, due to DeWitt's description of the playhouse as having flint walls and an audience capacity of 3,000.<sup>311</sup> Contained in Henslowe's papers was an incomplete copy of the contract for the building plans for the Fortune Playhouse, which, according to one scholar, "has been the most highly regarded document relating to Elizabethan theatre architecture."<sup>312</sup> With these publications of early modern documents, one incomplete and one contested, came the reinvigorated quest by scholars to uncover both the playing places of early modern drama in England, and their dramatic conventions of performance.<sup>313</sup>

Beyond scholarly exploration, this era saw interest in Elizabethan revival cultivated by practitioners as well. Shakespearean productions were mounted by amateurs and professionals with what were believed to be Elizabethan staging practices, or as is termed more recently as 'original practices,' 'Renaissance staging,' and early modern production practices.<sup>314</sup> The beginnings of this work may be seen

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<sup>309</sup> J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); 4. Gregg's publication drew much more attention than Malone's a generation earlier. See also Herbert Berry, "Americans in the Playhouse" *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976); 33.

<sup>310</sup> Herbert Berry, "Americans in the Playhouse" *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976); 33.

<sup>311</sup> Herbert Berry, "Americans in the Playhouse" *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976); 33.

<sup>312</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, "The 'Essence of Globeness': Authenticity, and the Search for Shakespeare's Stagecraft," in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); 16.

<sup>313</sup> J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); 4 – 5.

<sup>314</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, "Original Practice," in *The Shakespeare Theatre Guide to the Season's Plays: 2004-2005 Season*, edited by Dawn McAndrews, (Washington: The Shakespeare Theatre, 2004); 5. Many productions of Shakespeare that follow early modern production practices do not incorporate all of the elements listed by Hildy in this article, even so these productions may be referred to as an original practices production. For more information on original practices see Alan C. Dessen,

in a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* at the Haymarket in March of 1844, which included characters of the Induction dressed as they would have been in the “theatrical time and place in and for which” the play was written, a practice very different from the then usual ‘Antiquarian’ approach of setting a Shakespearean play in the historical time and place determined by the playwright.<sup>315</sup>

William Poel, later with the Elizabethan Stage Society, mounted fast-paced productions of Shakespeare on an Elizabethan-style platform stage with actors costumed in period clothing serving as characters in the play and as members of an Elizabethan audience.<sup>316</sup> For Claris Glick, the work of William Poel, beginning in 1879 with a production of *Hamlet* – prepared from a first and second quarto edition of the play and performed on a platform stage – marked the beginning of the Elizabethan revival movement.<sup>317</sup> Poel’s interest in the Elizabethan Revival was partly influenced

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“‘Original Practices’ at the Globe: A Theatre Historian’s View,” in *Shakespeare’s Globe: a Theatrical Experiment*, Christie Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); 45-53. Shakespeare’s Globe theatre in London began using the term ‘Renaissance staging’ in 2006 after Dominic Dromgoole was appointed Artistic Director. Joe Falocco, “Elizabethan Staging in the Twentieth Century: Theatrical Practice and Cultural Context” (Dissertation: University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 2006). Falocco uses the term early modern production practices in his dissertation and book: Joe Falocco, *Reimagining Shakespeare’s Playhouse: Modern Staging Conventions in the Twentieth Century* (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2010).

<sup>315</sup> Marion O’Connor, “Reconstructive Shakespeare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 76. For more information on Antiquarianism and Victorian Pictorialism see Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Charles Shattuck, *Shakespeare on the American Stage: From Booth and Barrett to Southern and Marlowe*. Vol. II. (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1987).

<sup>316</sup> For more information on William Poel’s career and the Elizabethan-style stages used in production see Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1954), Claris Glick, “William Poel: His Theories and Influence,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15.1 (Winter, 1964); 15-25, C. E. Montagu, *Dramatic Values*, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1911), Marion O’Connor, “Reconstructive Shakespeare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 76-97, Marion O’Connor, “‘Useful in the Year 1999’: William Poel and Shakespeare’s ‘Build of Stage,’” in *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), Stanley Wells, ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); 17-32. Styan, J. L., “Elizabethan Open Staging William Poel to Tyrone Guthrie” *Modern Language Quarterly*. Vol. 37 No. 3 (September 1976); 211-221.

<sup>317</sup> Claris Glick, “William Poel: His Theories and Influence,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15:1 (Winter 1964); 16.

by his study of the First (1603) and Second (1604) Quartos of *Hamlet*, which he believed contained dramatic information that surpassed the 1623 First Folio edition.

In the spring of 1881, Poel mounted a production of *Hamlet* based on the First Quarto in St. George's Hall, with a bare platform draped with curtains.<sup>318</sup> However, Poel was not satisfied with this stage configuration, particularly after the discovery of the Swan drawing in 1888, and would later develop the means he thought necessary to capture an Elizabethan performance of Shakespeare's play. Poel witnessed a production of *King Lear* in Munich in 1889 that incorporated the use of an open platform stage which, according to Dennis Kennedy, "was not authentically Elizabethan, but it nonetheless mapped out an alternative visual path."<sup>319</sup>

Putting these learnings into practice, in 1893 Poel mounted a production of *Measure for Measure* on a reconstructed stage he claimed was based on the Fortune Playhouse in a Proscenium Theatre. According to Robert Speaight, Poel was partly driven by the idea that an Elizabethan-style performance should actively include the audience within the time of the *actual performance*; they were not to be treated as spectators from another time and place observing a story set in Denmark or Padua. By reconstructing an English early modern playhouse, albeit only the stage, Poel attempted to engage his audience actively in the imaginative pursuit of drama, rather than relying on the illusion created by realistic depictions of time and place provided by scenic and lighting design.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1954); 49-50.

<sup>319</sup> Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); 37.

<sup>320</sup> Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1954); 78.



However, Poel's 'Fortune Fit-up' stage did not fully bridge the gap between players and audience in a proscenium theatre. Interestingly, it was Henry Folger who saw value in a full reconstruction of an Elizabethan-style theatre, including the stage as well as the playhouse. Folger was aware of William Poel's work in 1903 from attending Ben Greet's production of *Everyman* in New York, which was based on Poel's own production in London the prior year.<sup>321</sup> Decades later, when Folger was in discussion with architects Paul Phillippe Cret and Alexander Trowbridge about the Folger Elizabethan Theatre's design, Folger referred to Poel as, "at the present time the most prominent manager of the reproductions of Elizabethan plays."<sup>322</sup> Poel had even traveled to the United States in 1916 to direct a production of Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* and teach a short course in his production methods at the Carnegie Institute of Technology.<sup>323</sup>

William Poel spent many years following the cause of a 'National Theatre movement' that aimed to recreate the Globe playhouse in London. Poel built a model of the Globe Playhouse of 1599, intending it, according to scholar Martin White, to serve as a source of visual stimulation in his quest.<sup>324</sup> White's 1999 *Theatre Notebook* article "William Poel's Globe" analyzes Poel's Globe reconstruction, including sketches by Poel and photographs of a model based on his design. In 1929, Henry Folger presented his architects with a drawing from the Bankside acting

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<sup>321</sup> As discussed in Chapter One.

<sup>322</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>323</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, "Why Elizabethan Spaces?" *Theatre Symposium: Elizabethan Performance in North American Spaces*, Vol. 12 (2004); 106. Poel did not direct this production utilizing original practices. See Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in the Wooden O*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

<sup>324</sup> Martin White, "William Poel's Globe" *Theatre Notebook* 53 No. 3 (1999); 147-8. White's article contains sketches by Poel and photographs of a model (now lost) assumed to be Poel's Globe reconstruction.

edition of *Hamlet* that was based on William Poel's model of the Globe Playhouse.<sup>325</sup>

At the time, Folger was interested in pursuing a Globe reconstruction for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, and he presented the sketch to familiarize his architects with what he considered to be a reliable interpretation of the Globe Playhouse.<sup>326</sup>

In New York City in 1892, a year before William Poel used his 'Fortune-fit-up' stage in his production of *Measure for Measure*, a reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe was built at the Actors' Fund Fair at Madison Square Garden. The theme of the fair centered on "the wonderful reproduction of Shakespeare's house and the old-time New-York and London theatres," all designed by Stanford White.<sup>327</sup> Along with the Globe, versions of London's Duke's Theatre and William E. Burton's Chamber Street Theatre of New York adorned the fair grounds.<sup>328</sup> Various booths distributed throughout the fair, staffed by female theatre professionals and other volunteers, sold donated goods to visitors. Paying an admission fee allowed visitors both to shop and to view circus and vaudeville acts.<sup>329</sup> The weeklong fair was an extremely popular event in the city, and the first evening saw 10,000 visitors alone. In total, the event raised over \$163,000 for the Fund.<sup>330</sup>

Though it does not appear that the Globe was used for Shakespearean productions utilizing early modern production practices, the inclusion of a

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<sup>325</sup> F. J. Harvey Darton, ed., *The Bankside Acting Edition of Shakspeare: Hamlet*, (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., 1929).

<sup>326</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>327</sup> "Throngs Visit The Fair: Receipts for the Actors' Fund Growing," *New York Times* (4 May 1892); 4.

<sup>328</sup> "Opened by Joe Jefferson: First Night of the Great Actors' Fund Fair," *New York Times* (3 May 1892); 5.

<sup>329</sup> Benjamin McArthur, *Actors and American Culture: 1880-1920*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); 97.

<sup>330</sup> "Opened by Joe Jefferson: First Night of the Great Actors' Fund Fair," *New York Times* (3 May 1892); 5.

reconstructed Globe Theatre would become a common feature in future exhibitions held in England and the United States, as discussed in more detail below. The idea to include early modern theatres on the fair's grounds may have been suggested by previous exhibitions in New York and London that focused on England's early modern architecture. The *Old London-Street Company* attraction in New York, touted as "an exact reproduction of London of the seventeenth century,"<sup>331</sup> opened at Broadway and E. 8<sup>th</sup> Street in 1887.<sup>332</sup> Full of reconstructions of different types of buildings from Shakespeare's age, such as the Gunpowder-plot house, the old Devil's Tavern and the White-Hart Inn, served as a background for historical exhibits, "[t]radesmen in antique costumes...working on brass, iron, silver, etc.; and the air is filled with old English melodies."<sup>333</sup>

A year earlier in London, an exhibition meant to "reproduce some of the more interesting historical mansions, and also to give a few veritable specimens of the more ordinary houses and shops of a former period" was part of the *Colonial and Indian possessions of Great Britain* exhibition at South Kensington.<sup>334</sup> While these exhibitions did not contain a reconstruction of an early modern playhouse, they exemplify continued interest in English early modern architecture.

Later in the United States, universities and colleges became popular places for producing Shakespeare in makeshift reconstructions of Elizabethan-style theatres as well as practicing Elizabethan staging or original practices. In 1895, George Pierce

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<sup>331</sup> "Old London in New York," *Hartford Daily Courant* (29 November 1886); 1.

<sup>332</sup> George B. Bryan, "Dear Winston's Clever Mother: Lady Randolph Churchill and the National Theatre," *Theatre Survey*, 15 (1974); 155, 157.

<sup>333</sup> M. F. Sweetser and Simeon Ford, *How to Know New York City: A Serviceable and Trustworthy Guide, Having Its Starting Point at the Grand Union Hotel, Just Across the Street from the Grand Central Depot*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Boston: Rand Avery Company, Franklin Press: 1887); 85-6.

<sup>334</sup> "'Old London's at the Exhibition," *B. C. Bow bells: a magazine of general literature and art for family reading* (13 October 1886); 392.

Baker (1866-1935) and the English Department of Harvard University constructed an Elizabethan-style stage in Sanders Theatre. This reconstruction drew inspiration from the Fortune Contract and the Swan Drawing. The production of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman* was directed by Franklin Sargeant and the actors were students from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.<sup>335</sup> Fourteen years earlier, Harvard had experimented with a production of *Oedipus* where Sanders Theatre was converted into a classic amphitheater and the actors spoke their lines in Greek. But it was not until the 1895 production that the first Elizabethan platform stage was built in the United States.<sup>336</sup>

In 1903, Franklin Sargeant staged a production of *Twelfth Night* at the Empire Theatre with students from the Empire Dramatic School that utilized Elizabethan production practices. Sargeant's 1895 production of *Epicoene* (and a production of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* in New York City) had followed early modern production practices, including the use of actors directed to portray an early modern audience viewing the production and placards announcing changes in scene.<sup>337</sup> Sargeant's 1903 *Twelfth Night* did not incorporate either feature, instead utilizing scenic devices that required the audience to imagine much of the play's setting, such as:

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<sup>335</sup> Marion O'Connor, "Reconstructive Shakespeare," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 80. The students in the production were actually from the Empire Dramatic School, an educational entity that later merged with the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Harvard University used a reconstruction of the 1895 Elizabethan-style stage again from 1904-1908.

<sup>336</sup> Wisner Payne Kinne, *George Pierce Baker and the American Theatre*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1954); 58-59. Also see Christopher Scully's discussion of Baker's use of a reconstructed stage at Harvard in his dissertation "Reconstructed Spaces: Shakespeare's American Playhouses," Tufts University, May 2008; 178-189.

<sup>337</sup> "Shakespeare Given In His Own Way: 'Twelfth Night' Given Without Scenery at the Empire Theatre" *New York Times* (21 February 1903); 8.

two doors at the back of the stage and between them an alcove with sliding curtains in front. The doors served for all the entrances and exits....[and] the alcove was occupied throughout by the Duke Orsino's band of musicians...At the sides of the stage curtains were hung over a pole...made to represent [in the scene in Olivia's garden] the trees behind which Sir Toby, Maria, and Fabian hid while Malvolio was reading the letter.<sup>338</sup>

The *New York Times* review of the production praised it for its simplified scenic design where, "scene followed scene in rapid succession, giving a life and sign and concentration to the narrative that is impossible under modern conditions."<sup>339</sup> The reviewer marveled at the production's running playing time of approximately two hours, forty-five minutes (even though the production used the full First Folio text) and incorporated "delicious old English music" between acts to "refresh the audience."<sup>340</sup> Even though the review found the actors' performances to be "not above the modest average....the spirit of the play came out with a force and a freshness that has frequently been lacking in productions of gorgeous scenic magnificence."<sup>341</sup>

Also in February 1903, Frank Lea Short, former student of Franklin Sargeant and actor in the 1895 *Epiocene* at Harvard, reconstructed an Elizabethan stage fashioned after the Swan drawing at Mrs. Osbourn's Playhouse in New York City for

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<sup>338</sup> "Shakespeare Given In His Own Way: "Twelfth Night" Given Without Scenery at the Empire Theatre" *New York Times* (21 February 1903); 8.

<sup>339</sup> "Shakespeare Given In His Own Way: "Twelfth Night" Given Without Scenery at the Empire Theatre" *New York Times* (21 February 1903); 8.

<sup>340</sup> "Shakespeare Given In His Own Way: "Twelfth Night" Given Without Scenery at the Empire Theatre" *New York Times* (21 February 1903); 8.

<sup>341</sup> "Shakespeare Given In His Own Way: "Twelfth Night" Given Without Scenery at the Empire Theatre" *New York Times* (21 February 1903); 8.

productions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.<sup>342</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, the Folgers attended both. Critics dismissed the productions, with John Corbin of the *New York Times* calling Short's *Romeo and Juliet* an "unscholarly and frippery production,"<sup>343</sup> and Jeannette L. Gilder of the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, belittling Short's venture as "a huge joke."<sup>344</sup> The repertory of plays closed during the second week of its run. While panning Short's production, Corbin's review also called for more experiments with Elizabethan-style staging to help abate:

"...the scenery nuisance in productions of Shakespeare...[in favor of] representing the plays of Shakespeare under the conditions identical with, or analogous to, those for which they were written, [for] it is possible to give them a dramatic force and appeal to the imagination which have been conspicuously lacking in the productions of Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Richard Mansfield, and Mr. Beerbohm Tree."<sup>345</sup>

Beginning in 1902 with his production of *Everyman*, based on William Poel's production in England the year before, Ben Greet's companies appeared on Broadway and toured the United States off and on from 1902 to 1932. These tours exposed many to his approach to Elizabethan-styled productions of Shakespeare and other early modern plays, though Greet's use of early modern staging practices fluctuated

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<sup>342</sup> As discussed in more detail in Chapter One.

<sup>343</sup> John Corbin, "Topics of the Drama" *New York Times*, (12 April 1903); 25.

<sup>344</sup> Jeannette L. Gilder, "Miss Gilder's New York Letter," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1 February 1903); 35.

<sup>345</sup> John Corbin, "Topics of the Drama" *New York Times*, (12 April 1903); 25.

over the course of his career.<sup>346</sup> Raymond Macdonald Alden (1973-1924) and Ben Greet experimented with early modern production practices on an Elizabethan-style stage from 1902-5 while Greet temporarily chaired the Drama Department at Leland Stanford University in California.<sup>347</sup> In a picture of this stage, presented in a 1908 lecture by University of Pennsylvania Professor of English Felix E. Schelling, audience members wearing Elizabethan-style costumes are seen sitting on the stage and in galleries on two sides of the stage.<sup>348</sup> In 1969, Richard H. Palmer identified Greet's work as a major contributor to higher education's involvement with professional theatre towards the later part of the twentieth century in the United States. He also made an important observation about who found worth in Elizabethan Revival movement-inspired productions of Shakespeare:

Ben Greet was the chief exponent and populizer in the United States of the bare staging conventions which we take so much for granted today. The Elizabethan Stage Society, which was responsible in England for the beginning of interest in staging plays without scenery, sponsored Greet's first American appearance, a bare-stage production of *Everyman* on Broadway in

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<sup>346</sup> Lew Sparks Akin, "Ben Greet and His Theatre Companies in America: 1902-1932" (Dissertation: University of Georgia, 1974) ; 62. For more on Ben Greet's career see Winifred F. E. C. Isaac, *Ben Greet and the Old Vic; a biography of Sir Philip Ben Greet* (London: 1964 or 5).

<sup>347</sup> Marion O'Conner, "Reconstructive Shakespeare: reproducing Elizabethan and Jacobean stages," *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on the Stage*, Stanley Wells, Sarah Stanton, eds. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002); 80.

<sup>348</sup> "Reconstruction of an Elizabethan Stage, Leland Stanford University, California, showing the only use made of a Drop-scene." Felix Emmanuel Schelling's, "The Elizabethan Playhouse," (Read to the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, November 19, 1908), *Proceedings of the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia*, No. 25 (Philadelphia, Published by the Society, 1910); 153. Also available electronically at the Furness Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, <http://imagesvr.library.upenn.edu/cgi/i/image/image-idx?type=detail&cc=furness&entryid=X-furn1812&viewid=1&sstr=1&hits=1&q1=Reconstruction%20of%20an%20Elizabethan%20Stage%20C%20Leland%20Stanford%20University%2C%20California%2C%20showing%20the%20only%20use%20made%20of%20a%20Drop-scene.&cat1=All%20Categories&ths=12&txsz=50&slsz=1&c=furness> viewed January 26, 2009.

1902. The Stage Society had attracted considerable respect in academic circles for attempting to stage Shakespeare's plays in the Elizabethan manner and for reviving a large number of infrequently produced plays written by other Elizabethans. When Greet began making overtures to the members of college English departments which were his principal sponsors, he was undoubtedly aided by his association with the Stage Society and by his subsequent, successful bare-stage productions of Shakespeare in New York City in 1904, 1906, 1907, and 1910.<sup>349</sup>

Greet's exposure to the Elizabethan Revival movement and his work with original practices productions contributed to his development of 'bare staging conventions,' a term clarified by Dale Erwin Miller in 1971 as one that "really refers to simplified staging or minimal scenery and is thereby only the physical aspect of the total approach which Greet called "Elizabethan."<sup>350</sup> As Chapter One noted, Henry and Emily Folger attended numerous Elizabethan-style productions directed by Greet; they were some of the Fogers' favorites.

During the first decade that Greet worked in the United States, a temporary Elizabethan theatre was reconstructed in his home country. From April to October of 1912, at the *Shakespeare's England* exhibition in London's Earl's Court, organized by Mrs. Jennie Cornwallis-West (formerly Lady Randolph Churchill - mother of Winston Churchill), a "full, working reconstruction of the Globe Theatre was

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<sup>349</sup> Richard H. Palmer, "The Professional Actor's Early Search for a College Audience: Sir Philip Ben Greet and Charles Coburn," *Educational Theatre Journal* 21, No. 1 (March 1969); 52-53.

<sup>350</sup> Dale Erwin Miller, "Ben Greet in America: An Historical and Critical Study of Ben Greet's Theatrical Activity in America (Dissertation: Northwestern University, 1971); 9.



evidently the first of its kind to be built in post-Restoration England.”<sup>351</sup> Cornwallis-West’s motive for the exhibition was to “assist the movement for the provision of a Shakespeare national memorial.”<sup>352</sup> The entire venture was a financial failure due to several reasons: “inclement weather, the incongruity of the exhibition with the side-show atmosphere, the disinterest of the common man in this plaything of the rich and titles, and Mrs. Cornwallis-West’s “lavish expenditures,” always in excess of box office receipts.”<sup>353</sup>

The Folgers traveled to England often for trips that combined pleasure and book-buying forays, so it is possible that they attended this exhibition. They certainly were aware of it, evidenced by its inclusion in their personal collection – now on display at the Folger Shakespeare Library – of an ad from a magazine for the *Shakespeare’s England Earl’s Court, London*. The ad references that the exhibit featured a, “Complete Tudor Town, Elizabethan Plays, Dance and Music, and the Largest Collection of Modern Side Shows ever got together,” and the “Fortune Theatre.”<sup>354</sup> The ‘Elizabethan Plays’ were staged “as they were presented in the dramatist’s own day,” in a reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse, while the Fortune Theatre was used to exhibit “representations of Elizabethan dances, with the music of the period.”<sup>355</sup> Patrick Kirwan and his company of players “presented vignettes for

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<sup>351</sup> Marion O’Connor, “Theatre of the Empire: “Shakespeare’s England” at Earl’s Court, 1912,” in *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* edited by Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O’Connor, (New York: Methuen, 1987); 86.

<sup>352</sup> “Shakespeare’s England,” *The Sydney Morning Herald* (24 February 1912); 4.

<sup>353</sup> George B. Bryan (1974), “Dear Winston’s Clever Mother: Lady Randolph Churchill and the National Theatre.” *Theatre Survey*, 15 pp. 143-170; 165.

<sup>354</sup> Advertisement from an unidentified magazine, [n.d.], Folger Collection, Box 11, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>355</sup> “London Now Views Shakespeare’s Days: Success of the Big Earl’s Court Fair Due to Mrs. George Cornwallis-West,” *New York Times* (23 June 1912). This article contains a not to scale drawing of the

several Elizabethan dramas, each one running about thirty minutes.”<sup>356</sup> William Poel’s Globe model was displayed in a “Shakespeare Museum” on the grounds of the exhibition, though he was disappointed the model was not the basis for the exhibition’s reconstruction. Rather, architect Edward Lutyens designed the reconstructed Globe for the exhibition as well as the other structures.<sup>357</sup> While it is unclear if the Folgers actually visited this exhibit, they were aware of it and thought an advertisement about the exhibition was important enough to archive in their Shakespeariana collection.<sup>358</sup>

In the United States in 1916 another Globe Theatre was reconstructed, this time in celebration of the Tercentenary of Shakespeare’s death. The Philomathean Society, a literary club at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, constructed a temporary Globe Playhouse for a production of *A Comedy of Errors*.<sup>359</sup> This Globe reconstruction, built to hold approximately one thousand people, was designed by Horace Howard Furness, Jr., son of Shakespearean scholar Horace Howard Furness.

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grounds of the Earl’s Court Exhibition. The Globe Theatre and Fortune Theatre are represented in the drawing, yet much of the Fortune Theatre is obscured by the placement of the Globe Theatre.

<sup>356</sup> George B. Bryan, “Dear Winston’s Clever Mother: Lady Randolph Churchill and the National Theatre.” *Theatre Survey*, 15; 161.

<sup>357</sup> George B. Bryan (1974), “Dear Winston’s Clever Mother: Lady Randolph Churchill and the National Theatre.” *Theatre Survey*, 15; 161. The Theatres and Music Halls Committee, obviously concerned about issues of fire safety, required Lutyens plan for the Globe Theatre to be “erected at least twenty feet away from any other building and that no scenery would be used on its stage.” See Bryan; 157.

<sup>358</sup> One of the interesting features of the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library is that Henry and Emily Folger consciously contributed to this archive from ephemera relating to Shakespeare from their own life.

<sup>359</sup> “Cast on the stage of the Philomathean Society’s reproduction of the Globe Theater, constructed on Hamilton Walk,” University Archives Digital Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Available at <http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/archives/search.html?rows=50&q=Philomathean+Society+theatrical+production%2C+%22The+Masque+of+American+Drama%2C%22+1917+> viewed January 26, 2009. This image is incorrectly labeled in the archive as “Philomathean Society theatrical production, “The Masque of American Drama,” 1917.” That image is available at: <http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/archives/search.html?rows=50&q=comedy+of+errors+1916> viewed January 26, 2009.

The production was directed by Percy Winter, who had served as manager of the Orpheum Stock Company of Philadelphia and was the son of theatre critic William Winter.<sup>360</sup>

Performances starring students from the University of Pennsylvania ran for a week beginning May 15, 1916. Like the New York City Shakespeare Tercentenary celebration, the Philadelphia celebration spawned events at “hundreds of colleges, schools, churches, clubs and societies.”<sup>361</sup> An exhibit of Shakespeareana curated by Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach at the Academy of Fine Arts displayed a scale model of Furness, Jr.’s Globe Theatre reconstruction “executed by the Chapman Decorative Company from designs and drawings by Evans and Warner – Architects.”<sup>362</sup> The Folgers held a long friendship with Horace Howard Furness; it is likely they were aware of these celebratory events in Philadelphia. Paul P. Cret, architect of the Folger Shakespeare Library, taught at the University of Pennsylvania, revealing in a 1931 letter to Emily Folger that he had consulted with “the late Dr. Furness [and] with Dr. Rosenbach” on the features of early modern theatres.<sup>363</sup>

In 1921, Nugent Monk founded the Maddermarket Theatre in England, housed in a permanently converted Roman Catholic chapel that included an Elizabethan-style stage. Monk claimed he produced a half-scale reconstruction of “the portable ‘Old Fortune Stage’ – also called the ‘Fortune fit-up’ – which [William] Poel originally had built for a production of *Measure for Measure* at the Royalty

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<sup>360</sup> *Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Shakespeare Committee, 1916); 57.

<sup>361</sup> “The Shakespeare Tercentenary,” *Old Penn: Weekly Review of the University of Pennsylvania* 14 No. 30 (April 1916); 966.

<sup>362</sup> “Shakespeare Tercentenary: Exhibition of Shakespeariana,” *The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*, 1916; 406.

<sup>363</sup> Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia to Emily Folger, Glen Cove, L.I. (10 January 1931). Paul Philippe Cret Collection, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Theatre in 1893.”<sup>364</sup> Folger’s architect, Paul P. Cret, similarly scaled down his design for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre inspired by the Fortune Playhouse to “two-thirds of the size of the original” due to space limitations.<sup>365</sup>

Like Poel, Monk’s theatre was based on extant information of the Fortune Playhouse, but the theatre also departed from these specifications due to structural limits of the pre-existing building.<sup>366</sup> Monk also consulted W. J. Lawrence’s *The Elizabethan Playhouse and Other Studies* when designing his theatre, paying particular attention to Lawrence’s reconstruction of the second Blackfriars, which his theatre also resembles.<sup>367</sup> This was not the first time – nor would it be the last – that reconstructions of early modern theatres would incorporate features from numerous sources of speculative evidence. As Franklin J. Hildy explains in *Shakespeare at the Maddermarket: Nugent Monk and the Norwich Players*, “The Maddermarket Theatre...was intended to be a theatre where Monk could produce all of Shakespeare’s plays on the kind of stage it was thought Shakespeare would have had in mind when he wrote them.”<sup>368</sup> From the examples of the work of Poel and Monk, we begin to see a theme which will prevail in future reconstructions, that the aim was not necessarily to reconstruct exactly an early modern theatre – though those attempts

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<sup>364</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, “Playing Places for Shakespeare: the Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich,” *Shakespeare Survey* 47, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); 83.

<sup>365</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, 10 December 1928; 1. Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>366</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, *Shakespeare at the Maddermarket: Nugent Monk and the Norwich Players*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1986); 45-7.

<sup>367</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, *Shakespeare at the Maddermarket: Nugent Monk and the Norwich Players*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1986); 45.

<sup>368</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, *Shakespeare at the Maddermarket: Nugent Monk and the Norwich Players*, (Ann Arbor: UMI Research, 1986); 49.

did occur – but rather as Hildy coins it, to capture a theatre’s “essence of Globe-ness,” or Fortune-ness, or Blackfriar-ness, as the case may be.<sup>369</sup>

According to Herbert Berry, interest in, scholarship of the Elizabethan revival movement was overtaken by the United States after the turn of the nineteenth century. William Poel’s trip to the United States during this time is just one example of this development.<sup>370</sup> In the area of theatre production, however, the movement was not so much overtaken by the U.S. as it was transferred, by the work of Englishmen who had been influenced by William Poel and had then traveled to the U.S. to work. Thomas Wood Stevens, chairman of the Drama Department of Carnegie Tech (later Carnegie-Mellon University) became aware of Poel’s work from his collaboration with English born actor and director Ben Iden Payne. Payne had hired Poel to direct an original practices production of *Measure for Measure* at the Manchester Repertory Company in 1907, an experience which influenced Payne to develop his own interpretation of original practices he termed ‘Modified Elizabethan Production’ or ‘Modified Elizabethan Staging.’<sup>371</sup> Stevens and Payne would collaborate on a number of productions at Carnegie Tech incorporating early modern production practices, such as utilization of a reconstructed stage for their productions beginning in 1926. Their work would influence a production at the University of Washington in 1930 when

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<sup>369</sup> The phrase ‘essence of Globe-ness’ from Franklin J. Hildy, Class discussion, *Shakespeare and Early Modern Performance*, University of Maryland, College Park, September 7, 2006.

<sup>370</sup> Herbert Berry, “Americans in the Playhouse” *Shakespeare Studies* 9 (1976); 34.

<sup>371</sup> Payne and Stevens would collaborated together in 1934 (two years after the founding of the Folger Shakespeare Library) to stage truncated versions of Shakespeare’s plays utilizing Payne’s Modified Elizabethan Production practices in a Globe Theatre reconstruction (a full reconstruction including the stage and the house of the theatre.) designed by Stevens at the Merrie England exhibit during the second summer of the Chicago World’s Fair. Stevens and his company would be invited to reconstruct Globe Theatres and produce their repertory of plays (which included non-Shakespearean titles as well) at expositions in California, Texas and Ohio during 1935-37. <sup>371</sup> Stevens’ acting company even toured the United States during the exhibitions’ ‘off-season,’ exposing an even larger U.S. audience to Payne’s Modified Elizabethan Production approach.

another reconstructed stage was built for exploration of early modern production practices.”<sup>372</sup> Payne was hired as visiting director and collaborated with faculty member John Ashby Conway on the production in Washington.<sup>373</sup>

Another Englishman who brought elements of original practices to the United States was Harley Granville Barker. Barker was directly influenced by the work of William Poel, yet formed and experimented with his own interpretation of Elizabethan-style staging practices over the course of his career. He directed productions in England and the United States in the spirit of the Elizabethan revival movement. His productions of *Twelfth Night* and *The Winter’s Tale* in 1912 and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 1914 that ran in London and the United States have been considered as those with the broadest exposure of Poel’s Elizabethan production methods (as interpreted by Barker).<sup>374</sup> Henry Folger saved Sidney Low’s review of Barker’s 1912 production of *The Winter’s Tale* at the London Savoy that was reprinted in the *Evening Post: New York*. Low’s review highlighted aspects of the production that followed early modern production practices, which Folger would have appreciated:

“[r]emember only that you are to see this masterpiece of Shakespeare’s haunting fantasy in the order as it was given at the Globe Theatre on May 15, 1611. The scenes are Shakespeare’s scenes, not transposed or manipulated or

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<sup>372</sup> Marion O’Connor, “Reconstructive Shakespeare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 80.

<sup>373</sup> O’Connor, 80.

<sup>374</sup> Clarice Glick, 22. Joe Falocco disagrees with Glick, asserting that these three productions of Barker’s should not be considered (to such an extent as they have been by historians) to be productions that followed original production practices. See Joe Falocco, “Elizabethan Staging in the Twentieth Century: Theatrical Practice and Cultural Context” (Dissertation: University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 2006); 91-163. Glick calls Barker’s *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (1947), “one of the most influential critical works on Shakespeare of this century, [and] he incorporates almost every one of Poel’s principal theories.”

‘cut’; the text is Shakespeare’s text; practically every word that he wrote for his actors is spoken from the Savoy stage. Nothing is here to break the flow of that sweet and fluent verse, nothing to hinder the telling of the tale.’<sup>375</sup>

Low also heralded Barker’s production for extending the apron of the stage into the house of the theatre, creating an intimacy between actor and audience not possible with a proscenium stage arrangement and directing his actors ‘direct address’ the audience during soliloquys :

[f]or Mr. Barker has brought his stage to intimate touch with his audience, with no intervening orchestral gulf or disturbing bar of gleaming footlights. We are ourselves, as it were, dwellers in bohemia, we are gentlemen and ladies of Leontes’ Court, we are of the crowd at the village revels; so that it is natural enough for a character to come down to us and take us into his confidence. In that setting the soliloquy is spontaneous and appropriate; delivered from out of a picture frame against a background of painted canvas it seems so forced that the modern drama dispenses with it, and finds an inadequate substitution in the telephone. It could see all round the actors; they were living statues, as they were in the Greek Theatre, rather than living pictures. Mr. Barker’s solid, simple architectural stage, with its three planes, and its extension into the auditorium carries us in that direction. There was no picture-frame suggestion, no puppets acting at you out of a box. Mr. Barker’s

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<sup>375</sup> Clipping from *The Evening Post: New York* (19 October 1912). Box 21 Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

setting helps us to understand a good deal that seems unintelligible or unaccountable in the Shakespeare drama as usually presented.”<sup>376</sup>

While it does not appear that Henry Folger saw this production, he did think Low’s review significant enough to save in his collection of Shakespeariana. In addition, Emily Folger attended with two friends a performance of Barker’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* at Wallack’s Theatre on February 20, 1915. Mrs. Folger found that, “[t]he high-fantastical costuming [including, as she noted, the “gilded fairies”] made up for the plain...setting...Mrs. Bacon told Anne that G[ranville] B[arker]’s scenery is to make you feel as if you see scenery.” Of the actors’ performances she noted that, “Philostrate observed the rhythm - as did few others, and had a fine voice. Oberon had touches of poetry, and so did the four lovers and clowns.”<sup>377</sup>

In 1928 Henry Folger began consulting with his architects about his Elizabethan theatre. During the same year, half a world away in Japan, another reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre was built: the Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, on the campus of Waseda University in Tokyo, constructed to celebrate the works of William Shakespeare translated into Japanese by Professor Tsubouchi Shoyo. The museum is described as, “...modeled after the Fortune Theatre of Elizabethan England, and approximates the original in both exterior design and

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<sup>376</sup> Clipping from *Evening Post: New York* 19 October 1912. Folger Collection, Box 21, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>377</sup> Emily Folger, “Plays I Have Seen” (20 February 1915); 95. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. In 1912 Emily Folger attended a production of *Much Ado About Nothing* at the 39<sup>th</sup> Street Theatre with Annie Russell as Beatrice. Mrs. Folger described the scenery as, “Post-Impressionist or Gordon Craig or Granville Barker, I suppose. It was simple and formal Italian and was effective.” See: Emily Folger, “Plays I Have Seen” (20 February 1915); 90. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



interior construction.”<sup>378</sup> On the exterior of the museum lies the façade and stage of the reconstructed theatre, but the project does not include a ‘house’ surrounding the stage and yard. Reconstructing the stage portion of an early modern theatre and foregoing the complete structure, like Poel’s Fortune-fit-up stage, provided a means to experiment with early modern production practices without having to build or convert an entire theatre.

After the founding of the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1932, both the University of Illinois, Champaign in 1944 and Hofstra University on Long Island in 1951 also employed the use of reconstructed Elizabethan-style stages.<sup>379</sup> Hofstra University’s stage was modeled after John Cranford Adams’ Globe reconstruction. Adams, Shakespearean scholar and President of Hofstra University from 1944 to 1964, held one of the first fellowships at the Folger Shakespeare Library, which began in 1935. While there, Adams likely studied Paul P. Cret’s designs of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, including Cret’s own Globe Theatre reconstruction that Henry Folger briefly contemplated building. Adams’ 1942 dissertation, “The Structure of the Globe Playhouse Stage,”<sup>380</sup> led to his very influential 1942 work, *The Globe Playhouse: its design and equipment*.<sup>381</sup>

Various types of permanent and temporary reconstructions of English early modern theatres were in the United States at the 1934 Chicago World’s Fair, the 1935

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<sup>378</sup> The Tsubouchi Memorial Theatre Museum, Waseda University, [http://www.waseda.jp/enpaku/english/e\\_museum.html](http://www.waseda.jp/enpaku/english/e_museum.html), viewed March 12, 2007.

<sup>379</sup> Marion O’Connor, “Reconstructive Shakespeare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 80.

<sup>380</sup> John Cranford Adams, “The Structure of the Globe Playhouse Stage” (Dissertation: Cornell University, 1935).

<sup>381</sup> John Cranford Adams, *The Globe Playhouse: its design and equipment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942). Adams large scale model of his Globe reconstruction was a collaborative effort with architect Irwin Smith. See Irwin Smith, *Shakespeare’s Globe Playhouse; a modern reconstruction in text and scale drawings* (New York: Scribner, 1956).

San Diego California Pacific Exposition, the 1936 Centennial Celebration in Dallas, the Great Lakes Exposition in Cleveland, the 1939 New York World's Fair and at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1935.<sup>382</sup> Franklin J. Hildy's article "Why Elizabethan Spaces" skillfully traces the founding of these structures in Chicago, San Diego, Dallas and Cleveland.<sup>383</sup> According to Hildy, Thomas Wood Stevens, in collaboration with B. Iden Payne, promoted these Globe reconstructions and the truncated 'tabloid' Shakespeare productions exhibited in them. Angus Bowmer, founder and first Artistic Director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, credits B. Iden Payne with inspiring in him an "excitement of playing Shakespeare's scripts on a stage which conceptually resembled the one for which they were written."<sup>384</sup> Bowmer's design for the first Elizabethan stage built at the Festival, hastily sketched from memory on the back of an envelope, were based on "John Ashby Conway's setting for Iden Payne's productions [of *Cymbeline* and *Love's Labour's Lost*] in the University of Washington's Meany Hall."<sup>385</sup>

Today, numerous English early modern theatre reconstructions are either built or in the planning stages throughout the U.S. and abroad. These include the producing theatres of Shakespeare's Globe in London, Blackfriars Playhouse at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia, the Globe of the Great

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<sup>382</sup> Marion O'Connor, "Reconstructive Shakespeare," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Stage*, Stanley Wells and Sarah Stanton, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); 89-90, Franklin J. Hildy, "Why Elizabethan Spaces?" in *Theatre Symposium: Elizabethan Performance in North American Spaces*, vol. 12 (2004) Southeastern Theatre Conference and the University of Alabama Press; 111-112. For further explanation of how the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Elizabethan stage was designed and the transformations it experienced over the years see Angus Bowmer, *The Ashland Elizabethan Stage, its genesis, development and use*, (Ashland: Oregon Shakespearean Festival Association, c1978).

<sup>383</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, "Why Elizabethan Spaces?" *Theatre Symposium: Elizabethan Performance in North American Spaces* 12 (2004); 108-133.

<sup>384</sup> Angus Bowmer, *The Ashland Elizabethan Stage: its genesis, development, and use*, (Ashland: Oregon Shakespearean Festival Association, c1978); 10.

<sup>385</sup> Bowmer, 11.

Southwest in Odessa, Texas and the New American Shakespeare Tavern in Atlanta, Georgia. Theatre reconstructions still in the planning stages include the Rose Playhouse U.S.A. project at Shakespeare and Company in Lenox, Massachusetts, the Globe II Theatre at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, Virginia and the New Globe Theatre in Castle Williams on Governor's Island, New York.<sup>386</sup> Clearly, the fascination with English early modern theatre reconstructions and original practices has spanned over a century, and as one scholar has noted, "[r]econstructionism has had a long run."<sup>387</sup>

In 2007, scholar Don Weingust called for the assessment of the, "current state of 'original practices' performance, to situate 'original practices' within their historical... contexts."<sup>388</sup> In light of Weingust's call, it is prudent to assess how the early history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre situates itself within the Elizabethan revival movement – particularly since, according scholar Franklin J. Hildy, the founding of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre legitimized the same type of projects that followed.<sup>389</sup>

### Section 1: Setting up for the Design Process

Shortly after the Folger Shakespeare Library opened, it was praised by the magazine *American Architect*, which wrote, "This building has all the boldness and

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<sup>386</sup> For a detailed list see Franklin J. Hildy, "Globe Theatre and 'Essence of Globeness' Projects Since 1970," in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, Christine Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); 234-5.

<sup>387</sup> Ronald Vince, "Historicizing the Sixteenth-Century Playhouse," in *Theatre Symposium: Theatrical spaces and dramatic places: the reemergence of the theatre building in the Renaissance*, 4 (Tuscaloosa: Southeastern Theatre Conference and the University of Alabama Press, 1996); 49.

<sup>388</sup> Shakespeare Association of America website, <http://www.shakespeareassociation.org/meeting/schedule.asp>, viewed October 27, 2007.

<sup>389</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, "Globe Theatre and 'Essence of Globeness' Projects Since 1970," in *Shakespeare's Globe: A Theatrical Experiment*, Christine Carson and Farah Karim-Cooper, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); 21.

power of the monument [*sic*] and all the delicacy and rhythm of the lyric poetry of the bard whom it commemorates....[i]n design, in plan and in detail, it defies tradition on its exterior and bows in humble worship before the altar of archeology in its interiors.”<sup>390</sup>

Barry Day’s 1997 popular history, *This Wooden ‘O,’* the tale of Sam Wannamaker’s quest to reconstruct the Globe Playhouse of 1599, names the Chicago World’s Fair of 1933/34 as the beginning of ‘Globe Fever’ in the United States, a movement which produced replicas of Elizabethan Theatres in Oregon, Illinois, California, Texas, Ohio and New York.<sup>391</sup> Day included the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in this list, but he did so because he mistakenly believed the Folger Shakespeare Library opened after the 1933/34 Chicago World’s Fair.<sup>392</sup> As stated above, the Library was actually dedicated on April 23, 1932, and designs for the library were first drafted as early as December 1928, five years before the opening of the Chicago World’s Fair. Furthermore, the Globe reconstructions built during the 1930s referenced by Day were mainly influenced by the collaborative work of two men, Thomas Wood Stevens and B. Iden Payne.

Though the Folger Elizabethan Theatre allows the Folger theatre to stand apart, it is surprising that little has been written about the development of the theatre’s design. The Folger Elizabethan Theatre was the first attempt in the Western Hemisphere to successfully reconstruct a permanent Elizabethan style playhouse

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<sup>390</sup> Lancelot Sukert, “Folger Shakespeare Library,” *American Architect* 142 no. 2611 (September 1932): 40, 44. Here Sukert plays upon Ben Johnson’s Eulogy Shakespeare from the First Folio Edition of Shakespeare’s Plays 1623, “thou art a moiment [monument] without a tomb.”

<sup>391</sup> Barry Day, *This Wooden ‘O’: Shakespeare’s Globe Reborn*, (London: Oberon Books Ltd., 1996; Oberon Books, 1997), 19.

<sup>392</sup> Franklin J. Hildy, “Original Practice,” *04-05 Guide to the Season’s Plays*, (The Shakespeare Theatre, 2004), 5.

where the focus of the reconstruction encompasses the entire theatre, the stage as well as house. There had been attempts in England by individuals such as William Poel to foster support for the reconstruction of an Elizabethan playhouse to honor William Shakespeare since the end of the nineteenth century, but these attempts failed until 1997 when Shakespeare's Globe in London finally opened. Conversely, in the United States numerous temporary and permanent theatres have been constructed to experiment with various degrees of original practices productions.

The lack of attention paid to the Folger Elizabethan Theatre may be due in part to the fact that the Folger Shakespeare Library was financed by two individuals, unlike Shakespeare's Globe, which was built with funds generated from an aggressive, long-running and highly publicized development campaign. Folger, on the contrary, wished to generate as little publicity as possible about his intention to build the Library. As discussed in Chapter One, any widespread publicity would have alerted rare book sellers the world over to his intentions, who would have raised prices substantially when selling to him. In the early part of 1929, Folger's architects discussed announcing to the public Folger's intention to build the library. Alexander Trowbridge, Folger's consulting architect wrote to Paul Cret, Folger's architect,

We must both be careful to follow his [Folger's] wish to refrain from any publicity for the present. I can see his point that publicity increases the cost to him of additional books, but I am afraid his warning has come a little late, because the matter is already known in various places, and has been for some time. I will, however, try to live strictly

to his request until such time as he is willing to have a story written for the papers, which may not happen before next fall.<sup>393</sup>

Trowbridge was referring in part to the announcement made by Dr. Herbert Putnam of the Library of Congress to the press on March 22, 1928 of Folger's intention to build the library and donate his book collection to the citizens of the United States.<sup>394</sup>

When Folger died in 1930, nearly two years before the completion of the Library, he took with him the knowledge of his formal wishes regarding the design of the theatre now standing in the eastern wing of the Library. Over the ensuing eighty years, the common report was made that Folger intended a theatre to be built within the Library in the spirit of an Elizabethan playhouse. By Folger's choice, reinforced by multiple publications, no historical theatre in particular provided inspiration to him, to the consulting architect Alexander B. Trowbridge or to lead architect Paul P. Cret. In the July 1932 issue of *The Library Journal* William Slade, the first director of the library wrote,

The Elizabethan Theater is an attempt, not to reconstruct any specific playhouse of Shakespeare's day, as The Globe, The Swan, The Fortune, or The Curtain, but to reproduce the general effect, or atmosphere, of the theatres which Shakespeare knew.<sup>395</sup>

Before the Folger Shakespeare Library opened in 1932, articles discussing the impending opening of the library provided conflicting information about the

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<sup>393</sup> Alexander Trowbridge, New York, to Paul Cret, Philadelphia, 2 March 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>394</sup> "From Folger to the Nation," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 3 (April 1928); 23

<sup>395</sup> William Adams Slade, "The Folger Shakespeare Library," *The Library Journal* 57 no. 13 (July 1932), 604.

architectural design of the theatre. These reports ranged from the specific description that the theatre is “patterned...after the Old Globe Theatre of Shakespeare’s time,”<sup>396</sup> to the ambiguous explanation that the theatre “followed the general character of an Elizabethan courtyard.”<sup>397</sup>

In 1933, Cret contributed a chapter, “The Building,” to a published monograph introducing the Folger Shakespeare Library to the world. Cret states in *The Folger Shakespeare Library* that when the project was first introduced, the theatre inside the Library building should be “a reconstruction of a Shakespearian playhouse...used for the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays in their original staging.”<sup>398</sup> He then recounts reasons why the realized theatre’s design should not be considered an English early modern playhouse reconstruction: the small space allotted the theatre, windows to the outside, and no outdoor courtyard where playgoers stood. Cret then explains to the reader the difficulties provided when attempting to reconstruct one playhouse from this time period: first, the lack of conclusive physical data available on English early modern theatres and second, the abundance of conflicting information regarding features of playhouses derived from study of early modern play texts. From Cret’s architectural perspective, previous interpretations of both types of data had created reconstruction “monstrosities.”<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> Lucy Salamanca, “America Honors Shakespeare The Poet: Unlike Stratford’s Tribute to the Dramatist, Washington’s Will Be to the Bard, Housing Famous Folger Collection,” *New York Times Magazine* (August 24, 1930), 16.

<sup>397</sup> Eunice Fuller Barnard, “Shakespeare’s Fame in the New World: In the Great Folger Library, Now Nearing Completion, the Modern Arts Illumine the Art of the Elizabethan Bard,” *New York Times Magazine* (October 4, 1931), 9.

<sup>398</sup> Paul Cret, “The Building,” *Folger Shakespeare Library*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933), 32.

<sup>399</sup> Cret, 34.

Cret then lays out for the reader a brief description of what stimulated him in his design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. He first mentions drawing architectural inspiration from “old inn court yards with superimposed balconies.”<sup>400</sup> He does not, however, go into any more detail beyond this brief mention. He then describes specific details the Fortune Contract provided his design: what materials the walls were made of, that tile were used on the shadow over the stage and the distinct shape of the columns around the theatre decorated with satyrs.<sup>401</sup> Finally, Cret remarks that bright paint was used to play up the “homely construction.”<sup>402</sup> Cret does not explain this last detail, but perhaps provides it to ensure the understanding that the “homely construction” was a favored conscious choice in design.

*Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library*, a book published to celebrate the Folger Shakespeare Library’s seventieth anniversary, contains a description of the theatre that helps to illustrate their understanding of the architectural design of the space. The description in full reads:

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the Folgers’ plan for the library is the small replica of an Elizabethan theatre, shown at left. As Henry Folger himself wisely noted, “Any effort to reproduce permanently any one of the theatres known by name will involve too much risk of criticism, based on what is now known about such theatre, or may later be discovered.” Instead, Cret’s design uses carved oak columns and three-tiered balconies to suggest the courtyard of an early English inn, where traveling players performed on a raised platform at one end as

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<sup>400</sup> Cret, 35.

<sup>401</sup> Cret, 35.

<sup>402</sup> Cret, 35



spectators gathered in the yard below and on the balconies above.

Above, a canopy represents the open sky.<sup>403</sup>

The treatment of the theatre in this description is interesting for a few reasons. First, even after eighty years of existence the theatre continues to be viewed as an oddity, rather than an attribute to the building. Second, this description leaves out information that the Fortune Contract provided Paul Cret specific architectural information that influenced his design of the Folger Shakespeare Theatre.

What prevails is an explanation for the reader of how the courtyards of inns operated as performance spaces. The explanation of how a theatrical performance at an inn utilized “a raised platform at one end as spectators gathered in the yard below and on the balconies above,” is somewhat misleading, however, implying that it describes the stage arrangement that exists in the Folger Elizabeth Theatre. Any consultation of a picture of the theatre’s stage reveals a much more intricate and detailed interpretation of an English early modern stage. The carved oak columns Cret lists as derived from the Fortune Contract are mentioned in *Infinite Variety* as an element pulled from the courtyards of inns. Cret observed the Fortune Contract’s stipulations that “all the princypall and maine postes of the saide fframe and Stadge forward shalbe square and wroughte palasterwise with carved proporcōns Called Satiers to be placed & sett on the Topp of every of the same postes.”<sup>404</sup> Finally, the description of the canopy draped from the theatre’s ceiling in *Infinite Variety*

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<sup>403</sup> Esther Ferington, ed., *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Seattle: University of Washington, 2002); 37.

<sup>404</sup> Walter W. Greg, *Henslowe Papers: Being Documents Supplementary to Henslowe’s Diary* (London: A. H. Bullen, 1907); 6.

maintains that this element is meant to represent the open sky. This conflicts with Paul Cret's description of this architectural detail, which according to Cret does not represent the sky, but was instead devised to filter the light produced by electric theatrical lighting instruments hung above and focused down on the canopy. The effect of the filtered light was intended to suggest to the audience that they were sitting in an outdoor courtyard underneath a canopy that protected them from the rays of the sun.

The presentation of these details are not exactly correct. Particularly concerning is the conflation of information about the theatre's columns, which erases pertinent information about the specific architectural details of the theatre. Furthermore, conflicting information provided in 1930 and 1931 *New York Times Magazine* articles suggests a major shift in the design process of the architectural style of the theatre. William Slade's 1932 description of the theatre ensures against any criticism of architectural authenticity because, according to him, the theatre is not a reconstruction of a specific English early modern theatre. In an effort to uncover how the design of the theatre developed, the next section retraces and examines the steps taken by the design team during the design process.

#### Subsection 1: Introducing the Project

The Folger Shakespeare Library's collection of documents describing the theatre's design suggests an elaborate process. Paul Cret notes in 1933 that the Folgers originally desired the interior and exterior of the library to be Elizabethan or Tudor in nature. Cret alludes that he and consulting architect Alexander Trowbridge persuaded the Folgers that the exterior of the library should complement the existing

government buildings nearby, such as the Library of Congress and the Supreme Court Building.<sup>405</sup> Cret explains that a building reminiscent of England's early renaissance not only would appear out of place among the classical architecture firmly established by nearby Capitol Building and the Library of Congress – but would not have been allowed by the Commission of Fine Arts. Consulting architect Trowbridge asserts he was the voice of reason on the subject with Folger, convincing the book collector of a reasonable modification to the building's design.<sup>406</sup>

In his correspondences with Herbert Putnam of the Library of Congress and Congressman Robert Luce, Folger never reveals the style of building he contemplates erecting on Capitol Hill. He does, however, mention numerous times that the building contemplated will be “adequate and proper,”<sup>407</sup> and that an “entirely harmonious and suitable structure will be erected,”<sup>408</sup> one that “will be in complete harmony with the Congressional Library and other Government buildings,”<sup>409</sup> and finally, a building that will become an “ornament of the Capital.”<sup>410</sup> While it is unclear what degree of Elizabethan authenticity the Folgers imagined the exterior of the library to possess, it is clear they were aware how important it was the architecture of their building harmonize with its surroundings. While the Folgers apparently acquiesced under Trowbridge and Cret's suggestion, it was unlikely a

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<sup>405</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Library: Washington*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 31.

<sup>406</sup> Alexander Trowbridge to John Harbeson, 12 November 1928. Paul Cret Papers, Box 17, University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>407</sup> Henry Folger to Herbert Putnam 19 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>408</sup> Henry Folger to Herbert Putnam 27 January 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>409</sup> Henry Folger to Herbert Putnam 18 February 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>410</sup> Henry Folger to Robert Luce 23 April 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

difficult argument pressed by the architects. As Cret notes, “an architectural work has two aspects: artistic, in its plastic and general dispositions; utilitarian, in its solution of definite problems imposed by the client.”<sup>411</sup> It would seem that Cret and Trowbridge expertly negotiated with the Folgers.

The book collectors, however, would remain steadfast in their desire of an Elizabethan interior for the library. Reportedly, Henry Folger felt an Elizabethan interior would harmonize with the nearly 100,000 volumes that were to be housed in the library.<sup>412</sup> Also, the Folgers “thought that the scholars who were to work in the Library would feel most at home in surroundings reminiscent of the England of the XVIth or XVIIth centuries.”<sup>413</sup> While Cret must not have been satisfied with the arrangement due to his belief that “the interior and exterior treatment of a building must possess unity,” the project intrigued him enough to begin preliminary drawings of the library in December of 1928.<sup>414</sup> But before delving into the timeline of events surrounding the design and construction of the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, a brief background on both architects is helpful in understanding the working dynamic established between the architects and the founders.

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<sup>411</sup> Paul Phillippe Cret, “The Building,” *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 31.

<sup>412</sup> Robert M. Smith, “The Formations of Shakespeare Libraries in America,” *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* (July 1929); 72.

<sup>413</sup> Paul Phillippe Cret, “The Building,” *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 31.

<sup>414</sup> Paul Phillippe Cret, “The Building,” *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 31.

## Subsection 2: Consulting Architect Alexander Buel Trowbridge

As early as October 1928, Folger contracted a Consulting Architect to aid in his search for an Executive Architect to design his library project. Folger's choice, Alexander Buel Trowbridge, was a highly experienced professional in the field of architectural consulting. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from Cornell University in 1890, Trowbridge studied in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts for two years.

From 1906 to 1921, he served as a Senior Partner at his architectural firm of Trowbridge and Ackerman, during which time his work on two projects would help to shape the trajectory of his career. In 1918, at the recommendation of Trowbridge and the Governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, he was appointed the Bank's Consulting Architect, a position he held until 1924 and during which time he served as Consulting Architect on twenty-six Federal Reserve banks built in cities all over the United States.<sup>415</sup> From this he became an expert in the field of bank vault construction techniques. Needless to say, his expertise benefitted Henry Folger, who had nearly 100,000 volumes of rare materials requiring protection.<sup>416</sup>

Early in their partnership, Trowbridge sent Folger a number of photos of libraries to get a sense of what style of architecture appealed to the book collector. After viewing this material, Folger communicated to Trowbridge that he and Emily Folger very much admired Christ Church library in Oxford, England.<sup>417</sup> Built

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<sup>415</sup> "Alexander Buel Trowbridge, Consulting Architect," Pamphlet, March 1929; 5. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>416</sup> "Alexander Buel Trowbridge, Consulting Architect," Pamphlet, March 1929; 6. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>417</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington, 9 October 1928. Box 57, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

between 1717 and 1772, the Georgian design of the library is based upon “[r]enaissance interpretations of classical architecture.”<sup>418</sup> Designing a library building with an architectural scheme akin to Christ Church would be a step in the right direction in meeting design requirements set forth by the Commission of the Fine Arts in the District of Columbia. After Trowbridge made this initial assessment of the Fogler’s taste, he contacted a Philadelphia-based colleague who was superbly qualified for the position of Lead Architect for the Folgers’ library project: Paul Phillipe Cret.

### Subsection 3: Lead Architect Paul Philipe Cret

Paul Cret was born into a family of skilled laborers in Lyon, France in 1876. An uncle by marriage, Johannes Bernard, is thought to have assisted Cret early in his education as an architect, allowing Cret to attend a more prestigious private school. Cret chose to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Lyon beginning in 1893, studied in Paris at the Atelier of Jean-Louis Pascal and received his *diplome* from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris in 1903.<sup>419</sup> Before completing school, Cret accepted a teaching position at the School of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1902. Cret became one of the renowned instructors in the field of architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century before retiring from teaching in 1937. Until his death in 1945, he served as Lead Architect on numerous high profile projects such as the Pan-American Union Building (1908-10) in Washington, D.C., the Indianapolis Central Library (1916-17) and approximately

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<sup>418</sup> James Weeks, “The Architects of Christ Church Library,” *Architectural Journal* Vol. 46 (2003); 107.

<sup>419</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*, (New York: Cambridge University, 1996); 1, 2, 19.

twenty buildings including the main building on the University of Texas campus (1934-7). Able to transfer his talents to a myriad of design projects, he also worked on the building projects of bridges, industrial buildings, banks, war memorials and monuments. As noted by Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman,

Cret focused on the complexities and contradictions of the [design] program so as to draw out from the mundane requirements and lofty ambitions of the client a design that would extend the civic possibilities of the relevant historical building type. For Cret each project was a problem in representing to the public both the character and accessibility of the institution and its value for contemporary society.<sup>420</sup>

The Folgers possessed similar concerns for their library project, including how it would benefit the community in which it was placed, as well as providing ease of access to the areas of the Library reserved for the general public.

In the fall of 1928, Folger asked Trowbridge for pictures of Cret's latest project, the 1927 Detroit Institute of the Arts, and shared with Trowbridge that he thought Cret's Pan-American building was "most satisfactory."<sup>421</sup> Acting swiftly, Trowbridge wrote to Cret on October 28, 1928, confidentially requesting a dossier of Cret's work and instructing him to include examples of executed designs that possessed "a modern flavor but retaining the classic spirit."<sup>422</sup> After viewing the

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<sup>420</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*, (New York: Cambridge University, 1996); xvi.

<sup>421</sup> Henry Folger, New York to Alexander Trowbridge, Washington, 19 October 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>422</sup> Alexander Trowbridge to Paul Cret, 28 October 1928. Paul Philippe Cret Papers, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

1928 *The Construction of the Detroit Institute of the Arts: the Architecture*, the Folgers hired Cret for their library project.<sup>423</sup>

Cret's design for the museum in Detroit contains a number of elements similar to those found in the Folger Shakespeare Library. The marble exterior of the building possesses a modern interpretation of "Italian Renaissance style" reminiscent of the Christ Church Library at Oxford that appealed so much to the Folgers.<sup>424</sup> In addition, the exterior design of the Detroit Institute of Fine Arts needed to harmonize with the nearby Detroit Public Library building, constructed in 1921.<sup>425</sup> The interior of the Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, divided into zones like the Folger Shakespeare Library, contains areas dedicated to art exhibits, administration offices, a library, a lecture hall and a 1,200 seat theatre.<sup>426</sup>

Two additional key factors most likely convinced the Folgers to hire Cret. First, Cret had demonstrated the ability to harmonize exterior architectural elements of the Detroit project with previously established nearby institutions. In addition, his design of the interior of the building provided a particularly stimulating environment for the art galleries that would have particularly appealed to the Folgers, designing the gallery furnishings to intrinsically synchronize with the time and place in which the works of art were created. His method did not simply copy examples from history, instead artistically interpreting the various eras and showing "an artist's adaptation of

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<sup>423</sup> *The Construction of the Detroit Institute of the Arts: the Architecture*, (Detroit: Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1928).

<sup>424</sup> *The Construction of the Detroit Institute of the Arts: the Architecture*, (Detroit: Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1928); 5.

<sup>425</sup> The architect for the Detroit Public Library, Cass Gilbert (1859-1934), designed the United States Chamber of Commerce headquarters (1925) and a neighboring building of the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Supreme Court Building (1935) in Washington, D.C.

<sup>426</sup> *The Construction of the Detroit Institute of the Arts: the Architecture*, (Detroit: Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1928); 1.



the significant characteristics of old architectural forms, that seems rather to evoke the vital spirit of a past age than to give a mere effigy of its outward features.”<sup>427</sup> In Cret, the Folgers’ desire for an English early modern interior for their library could be executed with artistic precision. Furthermore, Cret was well qualified to make the building an ‘ornament of the capital’ while working within the Commission of Fine Arts’ designated parameters.

### Section 2: The Design Process Begins

On November 2, 1928, Folger met with Trowbridge, Cret, John Harbeson (of Cret’s architecture firm) and Cret’s assistant to discuss the design for the Folger Shakespeare Memorial. Examining these early exchanges provides insight into how the design of the theatre is intrinsically linked to the rest of the library building. As the meeting opened, Trowbridge read through a “Program for the Folger Shakespeare Memorial” he had drafted specifically for the meeting.<sup>428</sup> Naming the various requirements of the building, he listed the interior of the structure to “recall the sentiment of the Shakespeare Age,” while the “small” theatre was to be “Elizabethan if possible.”<sup>429</sup> The ambiguity in the wording of the program alludes to the design problem faced by Cret – how to artistically and effectively execute the design style of the interior desired by the library’s founders while reconciling the architectural differences of the interior and exterior of the building.

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<sup>427</sup> *The Construction of the Detroit Institute of the Arts: the Architecture*, (Detroit: Detroit Institute of the Arts, 1928); 5.

<sup>428</sup> “Meeting November 2 RE Folger Shakespeare Memorial,” [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>429</sup> “Program for the Folger Shakespeare Memorial,” [n.d.]. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman deftly described Cret's process of solving both challenges in *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*. One complication introduced by Folger was his insistence that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street side of the Library – facing the U.S. Capitol and Thomas Jefferson Library of Congress buildings – would be considered the 'front' of the library building. Conversely, Cret instinctively viewed the long side of the building facing East Capitol Street the 'front' of the structure, and he devised an ingenious solution to the design challenge. Essentially, Cret, with much input from Folger, ultimately treated the exterior of the library as an "exquisite container," a structure to be viewed as a "Greek temple, obliquely and picturesquely."<sup>430</sup> In other words, the west and north sides of the building could be treated as distinct yet equal facades that complement one other. In addition, Cret eliminated the orders of classical architecture in the building's exterior, instead incorporating Folger's desired design elements of bringing Shakespeare to life in the form of inscriptions and sculptural reliefs.<sup>431</sup>

Cret's solution for the building's interior was to treat the peripheral rooms – specifically, the entrance vestibules and gallery space – as an area retaining English Jacobean architectural elements treated in a classical manner. Before Cret developed his solution, he had to overcome Folger's disapproval for his second draft of designs for these areas submitted in February 1929. Folger's comments relate his concern that the treatment of the gallery space would be more beautiful than the art pieces displayed and wrote of the vestibules, "[t]hey are lovely, but not especially suited to

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<sup>430</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 174.

<sup>431</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*; (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 174.

an Elizabethan library.”<sup>432</sup> In addition to his comments, Folger sent to Trowbridge in April 1929 a copy of Joseph Nash’s *Mansions of England in the Olden Time*, which included representations he felt would be “suggestive” to both architects.<sup>433</sup> Trowbridge reacted favorably to Folger’s input, citing the book would be “helpful to Cret in his problem.”<sup>434</sup> Nash’s lithographs provide an abundance of examples of architectural elements in which to decorate the interior of the vestibules and gallery. As Grossman notes, Cret presents these architectural elements through his own artistic interpretation, “[t]he stonework of the vestibules and the oak paneling and plaster strapwork of the exhibition hall are suggestive of English Jacobean interiors, yet the severity of the details and their repetition deprived them of the idiosyncrasy and piquancy of the originals.”<sup>435</sup> Cret used this combination of styles to give visitors to the Folger Shakespeare Library a transitional space in which to make the great leap from the modern classicism of the building’s exterior to the authentically styled period rooms, the Folger Elizabethan Theatre and the Old Reading Room.<sup>436</sup>

#### Subsection 1: The Old Reading Room

Cret’s treatment of the design of the Old Reading Room developed considerably over the two months between his first and second submission of drawings to Folger. After viewing the first set of drawings on December 11, 1928,

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<sup>432</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, 28 February 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>433</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge 1 April 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>434</sup> Alexander Trowbridge to Henry Folger 5 April 1929. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>435</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*; (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 179-80.

<sup>436</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*; (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 178.

Folger informed Trowbridge that too much space was reserved for the Reading Room, reminding Trowbridge that he preferred an intimate effect within the room rather than a large, imposing space. Explaining further, Folger commented that the Reading Room was not meant for the general public and that, “[i]t will not be a reading room in the way reading rooms are used generally, nor even as a room for study.”<sup>437</sup> According to Folger the access to the Reading Room would be restricted to those who required conducting specific research within the collection. These individuals were “to be treated as guests and were [to] be made at home” while conducting research and that the library’s rare materials would not be “offered freely to all comers.”<sup>438</sup>

With this new information from Folger, Cret altered his design, readily incorporating Folger’s notes into his second set of floor plan sketches. These he submitted to Folger on February 8, 1929 without a formal meeting between the founder and architects, instead explaining his choices through notes Cret included on his most recent sketches. The notes Cret provided regarding the Old Reading Room reveal how closely he followed the founders’ desires. Cret writes,

While there are 28,950 volumes on the open shelves in this room...the room is yet treated as would be a rather large library in a private home, or a library room in one of the older and smaller English colleges.

There is a fireplace on the north wall...[a] gallery runs all around this room, with little stairways at the ends; a room completely lined with

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<sup>437</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge 20 December 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>438</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge 20 December 1928. Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

the warm colors of the backs of books. The room is covered by a timber trussed roof; the one here shown recalls that at Middle Temple Hall.<sup>439</sup>

Cret drawing inspiration from Middle Temple Hall is an interesting choice due to its association with productions of Shakespeare, activities of which the Folgers were aware.<sup>440</sup> The first recorded production of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* was given at Middle Temple Hall February 2, 1602 by the Chamberlain's Men.<sup>441</sup> Nearly 300 years later, William Poel staged an original practices production of *Twelfth Night* by the Elizabethan Stage Society at Middle Temple Hall in 1897.<sup>442</sup> Cret's reference of the similarity between his new design of the Old Reading Room and "a library room in one of the older and smaller English colleges," recalls the pleasure the Folgers expressed to Trowbridge regarding the design of the Christ Church library at Oxford. While the Christ Church library is a much larger institution than the Folger Shakespeare Library, the design elements mentioned by Cret of book-lined walls and the presence of an upper-level gallery are but two features shared by each interior. With the Old Reading Room's design shaping up after Cret's second submission, his focus began to shift to the challenge of the Theatre.

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<sup>439</sup> Paul P. Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Foundation, Notes Referring to Second Submission of Sketches," 8 February 1929. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>440</sup> Program for *Twelfth Night* by the Ben Greet Players at The People's Institute 14 May 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library.

<sup>441</sup> Mary Anna Wright, "Mark Rylance, A Twelfth Night to Remember," *The Independent*, 2 February 2002. Viewed 8 November 2010 at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/mark-rylance-a-twelfth-night-to-remember-659159.html>

<sup>442</sup> J. L. Styan, *Shakespeare Revolution: criticism and performance in the twentieth century*, (New York: Cambridge University, 1977); 59-60. Shakespeare's Globe in London staged an original practices production (with an all-male cast that included Mark Rylance) of *Twelfth Night* at Middle Temple Hall in February 2002.

## Subsection 2: Designing the Theatre Space

It is important to understand the difficulty in tracing the development of the Theatre's design. Reconstructing a timeline for the theatre's development relies on interpretation of written correspondences and reports by Folger, Cret and Trowbridge, for there is limited extant visual evidence to interpret.<sup>443</sup> Once the design of the Old Reading Room was finalized, Cret moved on to developing working drawings for the Theatre in June 1929. Examining this early development of the Theatre's design, the focus of the next section, does provide a testament of Folger's equal consideration of this space with that of the Old Reading Room – that the design of the Theatre was as important as other areas of the library.

At their first meeting on November 2, 1928, Folger stipulated two points about the Theatre: that the size of the plot of land he purchased would not allow for a large theatre, and that the Theatre should be located at the Third Street end of the building, "away from the Library of Congress [referring to the existing Thomas Jefferson building]."<sup>444</sup> Provided with these parameters and that the interior of the theatre should be Elizabethan "if possible," Cret set to work on his design.

Although there was lack of clarity as to Folger's desire for the design and use of the Theatre, Cret submitted to Folger on December 10, 1928 a design concept specifically drawn from research Cret conducted on English early modern theatres.<sup>445</sup>

The comments Cret drafted to accompany his design presentation reveal that he relied

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<sup>443</sup> Librarians at the Folger Shakespeare Library have been unable to track down any of Paul Cret's early drawings of the Library project housed in collection. Cret donated a large number of his drawings of the project to the Folger Shakespeare Library soon after the project's completion.

<sup>444</sup> "Meeting November 2. RE Folger Shakespeare Memorial. Present Messrs. Folger, Trowbridge, Cret and Harbeson." Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>445</sup> Discussion of this particular topic, presented later in this chapter, will reveal what specific materials Cret consulted.

heavily on information found within the building contract for the Fortune Theatre (1600). The Fortune Theatre was financed by theatre manager Philip Henslowe and actor Edward Allyn and constructed by Peter Street, who also was contracted to build the Globe Playhouse (1599). The contract contains many design specifications for the proposed theatre, such as the eighty-foot square exterior, as well as the open yard of the theatre measuring fifty-five feet square.<sup>446</sup> Because Henslowe and Allyn relied upon Street's previous knowledge of building the Globe Playhouse, many design elements within the contract are not specified. In addition, a drawing of the plans for the Fortune Theatre, mentioned within the contract, has not survived.<sup>447</sup> Cret, therefore, interpreted the information from the written contract and relied upon artistic interpretation supported by further research on English early modern theatres to complete the rest for his design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

Cret framed the discussion of his design by first mentioning from whence he drew inspiration for his adherence to Folger's request that the Theatre be 'Elizabethan if possible.' Cret revealed, "[t]he theatre shown, is inspired by the Fortune Theatre, and slightly larger than two-thirds of the size of the original."<sup>448</sup> Cret then explained how his design required alteration to fit within the Library building, including incorporation of two balconies (referred to in the Fortune Contract as galleries) rather than three as stipulated by the Fortune Contract because, in his view, the space allotted within the Library building was not large enough for three practical

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<sup>446</sup> George H. Cowling, *A Preface to Shakespeare*, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1925), 18-19. It should be noted that the theatre currently standing in the Folger Shakespeare Library is rectangular and not square. The first plans submitted by Cret have not been located in the Folger Shakespeare Library Collection.

<sup>447</sup> Gwyne Blakemore Evans, ed. with J.J.M. Tobin, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Second Edition, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997), 2; 1975.

<sup>448</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, (10 December 1928); 1. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

balconies. Cret's notes from December 11, 1928 also mentioned that the theatre was designed for a seating capacity of 350 persons. Evidently unclear as to what activities Folger envisioned for the space, Cret asked Folger if this number of seats was sufficient for his intended use of the theatre.<sup>449</sup>

Because Cret drew from information from the Fortune Contract for his design of the theatre, he encountered an interesting problem: how to reconstruct within one section of a roofed building the interior of a theatre that in its original state was an outdoor playhouse? Ingeniously, Cret incorporated a velum (from the Latin for curtain) to be draped above the courtyard. Historically, the velum was intended to act as protection for the audience from the sun and other elements. Cret had first considered making the ceiling plaster and painting it "blue, and by means of lighting, to give the effect of space." It is hard to imagine how Cret envisioned this first choice of treatment for the ceiling of the theatre. Anyone who has visited the Grand Canal Shoppes at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas knows how jarring the presence of the painted fresco blue-sky surrounding the mall's interior can be. Conversely, Cret found that the use of the "velum has seemed less theatrical" and that it suggested the "atmosphere of the old courtyard."<sup>450</sup> It is safe to assume that by the phrase 'old courtyard,' Cret meant the yard of an outdoor playhouse where the audience would have stood. Cret's desire for the audience's buy-in to the reconstructed surroundings of an outdoor theatre recalls Shakespeare's theatrical device of repeatedly asking the audience to imagine the world in which the action of his dramas takes place.

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<sup>449</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, (10 December 1928); 1. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>450</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, (10 December 1928); 1. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



At the December 1928 meeting with Folger, Cret presented two options for the Library's design. Investigating the elements of Cret's "Scheme B December 1928: Main Floor Plan," the plan not chosen by Folger, one observes some interesting features. First, the theatre's dimensions as drawn in 'Plan B,' like that of the Fortune Theatre, are square.<sup>451</sup> In addition, the vestibules and Old Reading Room are larger than those in the realized building. Finally, the Exhibition Hall that runs along the front of the realized building is not incorporated into the design. In this design, more space is given overall to areas where access by the public would be restricted, namely the Old Reading Room. By choosing Cret's Plan 'A' design, Folger essentially chose a greater amount of the square footage within the building to be used by the general public; the Exhibition Hall [absent from Plan 'B'], the vestibules and the Theatre.<sup>452</sup> In Cret's 'A' design, the theatre's square footage is enlarged by moving the north wall of the theatre towards the northern front of the building along East Capitol Street. The inclusion of the Exhibition Hall along the front of the building in Scheme 'A' pushes the Old Reading Room to the center-rear of the building, providing – as scholar Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman notes – a barrier between the noise from East Capitol Street and the room where scholars would consult works from the library's

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<sup>451</sup> Paul P. Cret, "Scheme B, December 1928; Main Floor Plan." Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. A copy of "Scheme A December 1928; Main Floor Plan," which is the floor plan that Folger approved has not survived, but looking at later drawings of the approved Scheme A shows a much larger space within the library devoted to the theatre. Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman discusses this process in Chapter 8 of *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*.

<sup>452</sup> An extant copy of the Cret 'Plan A' plans from December 1928 is not available at the Folger Shakespeare Library. I agree with Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman's assertion that 'Plan A' is very close to the footprint of the realized Folger design.

collection.<sup>453</sup> Finally, the vestibules shrink in size from Scheme ‘A’ to make room for the larger theatre and the exhibition hall.

In the correspondences between Folger and Trowbridge from Cret’s first presentation of sketches and his second submission of sketches on February 8, 1929 Folger provided no feedback on the design of the Theatre. Since a copy of Cret’s plan from the February 1929 submission to Folger is not available, one is left to decipher the development of the design from written notes and correspondences only. It appears, though, that during their first meeting in December, Folger answered Cret’s question as to how large to make the Theatre. In Cret’s notes accompanying his sketches dated February 8, 1929 Cret wrote, “[a]s Mr. Folger does not wish to provide a great number of seats, it has been possible to make the theatre much more in the form of the theatre of Shakespeare’s time.” While Cret does not elaborate in his notes on this point, it is safe to assume that without the requirement of putting a large number of seats into the theatre, there is ample room for the decorative elements from English early modern playhouses to be incorporated into the theatre’s design. The specific details of these decorative elements, however, do not become a concern of Folger and his architects until some months later in 1929.

Further describing the Theatre’s design, Cret mentioned that “[i]n the basement...are dressing rooms for the theatre, storage space and workshop...”<sup>454</sup> The blueprints of the “Basement Plan” of the Library dated November 4, 1929 show Cret included six dressing rooms in the basement under the theatre, with women’s and

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<sup>453</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 178.

<sup>454</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, (10 December 1928); 2. Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

men's toilets in very close proximity of the dressing rooms. From this blueprint the largest dressing room measured approximately fourteen feet by seven feet, ten and a half inches, and the smallest measured approximately seven feet, seven inches by seven feet, ten and a half inches. The four remaining dressing rooms measured approximately eight feet by ten feet, eleven inches.<sup>455</sup> The provision of dressing rooms in the basement is a strong indication that the Theatre was intended for performances or other public presentations of some variety, and the number and varying sizes of the dressing rooms could have functionally accommodated a cast of actors playing in one of Shakespeare's plays – though by today's standards, the rooms would be considered prohibitively small.

Lastly, Cret mentioned again the intended use of a velum draped over the ceiling, with the added note that the velum would be "lit from above to carry out the illusion of the out-door court."<sup>456</sup> Here, Cret expressed the intention of using hidden artificial lighting to create the atmosphere of an exterior space within the interior of a building.<sup>457</sup> This comment could be taken as an insinuation of the popular theory at the time that public Elizabethan playhouses developed from temporary stages erected at one end of the yard of inns.<sup>458</sup> Yet, as there had been to date no discussion between Folger, Cret and Trowbridge of inn-yard theatres, it is safe to assume that Cret was not referring to this type of theatre. Nearly two years would pass before Cret and

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<sup>455</sup> Paul P. Cret, "Basement Plan, Work No. 226, Sheet No. 3" (4 November 1929) found in Architectural drawings for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 East Capitol Street, S.E., Washington, D.C., Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington.

<sup>456</sup> Paul P. Cret, *Folger Shakespeare Memorial Report*, (10 December 1928); 1. Folger Collection, Box 58 A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>457</sup> According to Cret the theatre is represented in two sketches from his submission to Folger on February 8, 1929: "in plan on drawing 3 and in the section on drawing 8." Unfortunately these drawings, along with all others from February 8, 1929 have been lost.

<sup>458</sup> An example of this theory may be found in Walter H. Godfrey's article "An Elizabethan Theatre," *Architectural Review* 23 (Spring 1908), 243.

Trowbridge began referring to the Folger Shakespeare Theatre as a theatre based on inn-yard theatres. At this point in time, the logical assumption is that Cret is referring to the yard of English early modern playhouses, like the Fortune that he specifically references, which were open to the elements.

While Cret prepared his third set of drawings, Folger began to suggest research material for Trowbridge and Cret to examine. In a letter to Trowbridge dated April 1, 1929, Folger mentioned a pasteboard model of a reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre, directed by Walter H. Godfrey, executed by architect James P. Maginnis and permanently housed at the Dramatic Museum at Columbia University.<sup>459</sup> Folger suggested that someone from the design team inspect the model, which Godfrey based reconstruction on his interpretation of the Fortune Contract, at their convenience. In Folger's mind, it would make sense for Cret to consult it since he had based his theatre's design on information from the Fortune Contract. Godfrey presented the model to Brander Matthews, Shakespearean scholar, founder of the Dramatic Museum and professor at Columbia University.<sup>460</sup>

Along with his letter of April 1, 1929 to Cret, Folger included a sketch of a "Shakespeare Playhouse" drawn by Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum.<sup>461</sup> It is difficult to know definitively what this sketch looked like and how Folger obtained it. In

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<sup>459</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York, to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 1 April 1929, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>460</sup> This model is available for viewing on the World Wide Web, [www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/treasures/html/](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/treasures/html/)

<sup>461</sup> This sketch does not appear in the Special Collections at the Folger Shakespeare Library. However, inside the back cover of *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 4 (January 1929) is the drawing by Ada Beckwith after a design by Samuel Tannenbaum, "A Typical Elizabethan Playhouse." When multiple editions of this journal are bound together, however, this drawing is excluded. Later Folger mentions the sketch "Typical Elizabethan Stage" designed and described by Tannenbaum which can be found in E. H. C. Oliphant, *Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929), xix-xx. These are the same drawing by Tannenbaum given a different title only.

Folger's letter, he calls Tannenbaum an "authority, and undoubtedly this [Tannenbaum's sketch] is quite correct."<sup>462</sup> Tannenbaum published a number of books on Shakespeare, and though none were in the area of theatre architecture, he did publish a sketch of a theatre reconstruction in the January 1929 issue of the Shakespeare Association of America's *Bulletin* – a publication for which Tannenbaum served as the editor for many years and contributed to often.<sup>463</sup> His sketch, "A Typical Elizabethan Playhouse," shows the interior of a polygonal outdoor playhouse with three galleries and a stage projecting into the yard. Folger, a member of the Shakespeare Association of America, received their *Bulletin*. Folger refers to the sketch sent to Trowbridge as a "Shakespeare Playhouse" but he may have simply altered the name of the sketch while writing his letter.

Three days after sending Trowbridge the Tannenbaum sketch, Folger would send along Nash's *Mansions of England in Olden Time* as mentioned in the section of the design for the Old Reading Room. Although the publication contains no drawings of theatres, the architectural details provided in Nash's drawings would have assisted Cret in his problem of the Theatre's architectural detail design. A little less than two weeks later after receiving Nash's book, on April 16, 1929, Cret revealed his third set of plans to Folger at his office at Standard Oil in New York. At this point in the design process, the focus begins to logically move from the 'footprint' of the theatre

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<sup>462</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York, to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 1 April 1929, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>463</sup> Tannenbaum informed Emily Folger in 1931 of his intent of publishing a book on English early modern theatres, although he never published such a book. Samuel Tannenbaum, New York to Emily Folger, New York, 7 January 1931. Paul Philippe Cret Collection, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

space to the beginnings of what the actual finished theatre, with all of its intricate detail, would look like upon completion.

At their meeting, Cret presented his third set of drawings, which included an elevation drawing of the theatre. Folger was quite pleased upon viewing the elevation and commented that “it is going to be lovely, and I think that you (Mr. Cret) will have something in the end that is highly praised.”<sup>464</sup> Yet, Folger again mentioned to Cret the Godfrey model of the Fortune Playhouse at the Dramatic Museum, which suggests a lack of complete satisfaction with Cret’s current design. Cret retorts that, in his opinion, the Godfrey “reconstitution”<sup>465</sup> was “likely...inaccurate.”<sup>466</sup> It is important to note that Godfrey was free with certain specifications from the Fortune Contract in his reconstruction of the Fortune, such as his placement of stairways in corners within the theatre building rather than attached to the outside, a point on which scholars had previously taken him to task.<sup>467</sup>

In defense of his current design, Cret stated again his drawings were “based on extant specifications,”<sup>468</sup> which logically refer to specifications from the Fortune Contract itself. From this exchange between Folger and Cret, it is safe to assume that Cret wished to depend on his professional artistic ability to interpret the hard evidence, scant as it may have been, on Elizabethan theatres rather than draw from

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<sup>464</sup> John F. Harbeson, “Folger Shakespeare Foundation, Notes on meeting at Mr. Folger’s office on April 15, 1929,” April 16, 1929. Box 58A, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>465</sup> The use of the antiquated term ‘reconstitution’ is equivalent to the contemporary use of ‘reconstruction.’

<sup>466</sup> John F. Harbeson, *Notes on Meeting at Mr. Folger’s Office*, Folger Shakespeare Foundation, New York, 15 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>467</sup> James Stinson, “Reconstructions of Elizabethan Public Playhouses,” *Studies in the Elizabethan Theatre*, Charles T. Prouty, ed. (Hamden: Shoe String Press, Inc., 1961), 71.

<sup>468</sup> John F. Harbeson, *Notes on Meeting at Mr. Folger’s Office*, Folger Shakespeare Foundation, New York, 15 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

another's design that contained, in his opinion, inaccuracies. Folger, however, held a different view on the importance of the theatre's authenticity. For him, the theatre was to be, "educational, for the public to see somewhat of what a theatre was in those days – even if not absolutely accurate." Although Folger's desire for authenticity was not particularly strong at this point in the design process, over the ensuing weeks after this meeting he would conduct more research in this area.

Another item discussed at this meeting was the need to fireproof the woodwork that would become such a prominent feature of the interior of the building. As a possible solution Cret suggested dividing the library into sections as a protection against the rapid spread of fire, and that the woodwork could be a thin veneer applied over a fireproof material. Trowbridge commented that he would investigate the fire law of the District of Columbia and its effect on a theatre seating less than 300 persons, but he specifically stated that the Theatre may need to be labeled a "Lecture Room."<sup>469</sup> The specificity in Trowbridge's comments strongly suggests his knowledge of the District of Columbia's Building Codes prior to this meeting with Folger; that D.C. officials would not approve the building of such a Theatre as Folger desired. Rather than simply stating the fact to Folger, he presented the *possibility* of a problem so as to acquaint Folger with the issue without raising his client's alarm.

The 1925 *Building Code of the District of Columbia* required any theatres built after July 1, 1925 to be "of fireproof construction from the foundation up."<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> John F. Harbeson, *Notes on Meeting at Mr. Folger's Office*, Folger Shakespeare Foundation, New York, 15 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>470</sup> Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Building Code of the District of Columbia*, (July 1, 1925); 26. The *Building Code of the District of Columbia* was published again in 1930 presumably with updates, so the Folger Shakespeare Library project had to follow the provisions set forth in the 1925 publication.

Furthermore, the code stated that theatres seating 300 persons or more shall require specific ventilation equipment as approved by the Inspector of Buildings.<sup>471</sup> The Code also stipulated many safety requirements, such as arrangement of seating and the inclusion of an emergency asbestos fire curtain effectively separating the stage from the house of the theatre. Implementing these features into the theatre's design would have forced Folger to abandon his goal of including an Elizabethan style theatre in the Library building. The logical solution to circumvent these provisions at that time was to follow Trowbridge's suggestion to reduce the Theatre's capacity below 300 persons, and to forgo calling it a theatre in favor of a Lecture Room. Folger obviously agreed with Trowbridge's observation, for by July 1930 plans of the Theatre were no longer labeled as such, but were instead labeled "Lecture Room." After viewing Cret's third set of drawings on April 16 1929, Folger expanded his research on reconstructions of Elizabethan theatres and appears to have developed a desire to reconstruct a theatre linked directly to Shakespeare. After spending two weeks ruminating on Cret's third set of plans, he wrote to Trowbridge on April 29, 1929, declaring, "[r]eflecting at length on the plans you have submitted, I have rather concluded that we had better do what we can to make the Theatre a reproduction of the Globe, rather than the Fortune Playhouse."<sup>472</sup> This change of heart can be attributed to Folger consulting the work of Shakespearean scholar Joseph Quincy Adams, who the Folgers would later appoint as the Library's Director of Research. Folger's letter quotes Adams' 1923 book *A Life of Shakespeare*, writing that

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<sup>471</sup> Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Building Code of the District of Columbia*, (1 July 1925); 127.

<sup>472</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.



Shakespeare “was one of the proprietors [of the Globe], and more than any other building it is associated with the greatest achievements of his career.”<sup>473</sup> Years later, Sam Wannamaker, the champion of Shakespeare’s Globe in London, demonstrated the same reasoning for rebuilding the first Globe of 1599.<sup>474</sup> As a recent captain of industry, who had worked his way steadily through the ranks of Standard Oil, this nugget of information regarding Shakespeare’s business dealings may have appealed to Folger’s enterprising spirit. Interpreting Adams’ work, Folger commented that, “[a]s I understand it, the Shakespeare Company, after the Fortune Theatre was built, played in that theatre, but Shakespeare did not have a financial interest in it, as he had in the Globe.”<sup>475</sup>

Along with the letter, Folger sent to Trowbridge a copy of Adams’ book *Shakespearean Playhouses*.<sup>476</sup> Adams’ work provides two chapters devoted to the theatres under consideration for the library building; the Globe and the Fortune. After reading the book, Trowbridge forwarded the volume on to Cret with the comment, “I have enjoyed the chapter on the Globe and Fortune Theatres – although they refer chiefly to lawsuits and fights.”<sup>477</sup> Trowbridge seemingly underestimated the value of the publication’s ability to provide archeological information about the two theatres, and Cret’s opinion of Adam’s book goes unreported. Interestingly, the first chapter of Adams’ book, “The Inn-Yards,” provides information on the style of theatre Cret

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<sup>473</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1. Joseph Quincy Adams, *A Life of Shakespeare* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923); 288.

<sup>474</sup> See Barry Day, 81.

<sup>475</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>476</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>477</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York to Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, 8 May 1929. Box 57 Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

and Trowbridge would later claim the Folger Shakespeare Theatre is heavily based upon. Yet, there is no evidence that Cret and Trowbridge discussed in any of their correspondences or reports about the design of the FST this type of theatre.

Folger also sent Trowbridge a copy of “a little edition of Hamlet, just issued.”<sup>478</sup> This edition of *Hamlet* is the *Bankside Acting Edition of Shakespeare* from 1929.<sup>479</sup> Folger wanted Cret to see “a sketch of the Globe Theatre from a model made by Wm [William] Poel.” The *Bankside Acting Edition of Hamlet* that Folger sent to his architects contains an unattributed sketch of the interior of “The Globe Theatre, Bankside: After Mr. William Poel’s model.”<sup>480</sup> In this instance, Folger considered the opinion of a theatre practitioner as well as a scholar as an authority on the subject of playhouse reconstructions.

Folger became caught up in the idea of pursuing a reconstruction of the Globe playhouse. He stated to Trowbridge that “it seems to me that the main difference between the Globe and the Fortune theatre is that the interior of the Globe was circular.”<sup>481</sup> Folger believed in the ability of his architect to alter the design to reflect a round interior by his statement “Mr. Cret’s cleverness will not make a change to this at all difficult.”<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>479</sup> A week later Trowbridge forwarded to Cret a volume of *The Bankside Acting Edition of Shakespeare*, which I have taken to mean the edition of *Hamlet* Folger refers to here. The library at University of California-Berkeley is the only library holding this volume according to WorldCat and thus far there is no evidence of the volume at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

<sup>480</sup> F. J. Harvey Darton, ed., *The Bankside Acting Edition of Shakespeare: Hamlet*, (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton & Co., 1929).

<sup>481</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>482</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 29 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

However, despite Folger's excitement for reconstructing the Globe, he continued to forward to his architects material on the Fortune Theatre. On May 6, 1929 Folger sent to Trowbridge a sketch of the interior of the Fortune Theatre that "is from an edition of Elizabethan plays now being published."<sup>483</sup> He brought to Trowbridge's attention the theatre's interior in the sketch where "there are three galleries, or tiers of boxes."<sup>484</sup> Apparently Folger continued to be dissatisfied with Cret's decision to reduce the number of galleries in the Theatre's design. It appears Cret placated Folger's dissatisfaction, as today's Folger Elizabethan Theatre contains three galleries.<sup>485</sup> The edition of Elizabethan plays Folger referred to appears to be the volume edited by E. H. C. Oliphant, entitled *Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists*, the only collection of Elizabethan plays published in 1929.<sup>486</sup> Included in this volume is a sketch of an outdoor Elizabethan playhouse by Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum labeled a "Typical Elizabethan Stage," and not the interior of the Fortune Theatre. The playhouse in Tannenbaum's sketch is obviously a polygonal structure and not square like the Fortune Theatre. Even more perplexing is the fact that Tannenbaum's sketches that appear in *Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists* and the aforementioned journal the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin* are identical, except that the titles of the sketches change from "A Typical Elizabethan Playhouse" to "A Typical Elizabethan Stage." Nonetheless, Tannenbaum's sketch shares many

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<sup>483</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 6 May 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>484</sup> Henry Clay Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 6 May 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>485</sup> Since the Library's founding the third gallery in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, by design, was not meant for practical use by audience members but as a storage space.

<sup>486</sup> Samuel A. Tannenbaum "A Typical Elizabethan Stage" drawn by Ada Beckwith and "Note on the Elizabethan Theatre," *Shakespeare and His Fellow Dramatists: A Selection of Plays Illustrating the Glories of the Golden Age of English Drama*, E. H. C. Oliphant, ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1929), xiii-xx.

elements of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre photographed on its completion in 1932.<sup>487</sup> These elements include a low rail running along the downstage edge of the stage, a pair of oblique doors, a pair of oblique casement windows, an inner below and upper above stage opening, with curtains, three galleries and a stage that does not project into the middle of the yard.

On May 6, 1929, Cret wrote to Trowbridge about research he had conducted on modeling the Folger Theatre after the Globe. He stated the circular design desired by Folger did not conform to the space allotted to the theatre within the library, but he was confident that “where there’s a will there’s a way,” and if Folger was bent on a circular design, then he would make it happen.<sup>488</sup> At this point Cret apparently held a positive view of Folger’s idea, for he mentioned in the closing of his letter, “[w]e are not used, of course, now-a-days, to have the people seated around the stage (some even in back of it) as was the case in the Globe,” and that such an arrangement might be quaint.<sup>489</sup>

On May 8, 1929, Trowbridge forwarded to Cret Adam’s *Shakespearean Playhouses*, and *The Bankside Acting Edition of Shakespeare (Hamlet)*. Two weeks later, Cret submitted to Folger his new study of the Folger Shakespeare Library floor plan that would include a Globe playhouse reconstruction. His drawing, labeled *Part Plans Showing Circular Shakespearian Theatre for the Folger Shakespeare*

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<sup>487</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Library: Washington*. ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933.)

<sup>488</sup> Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 6 May 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>489</sup> Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 6 May 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

*Foundation in Washington D.C.*,<sup>490</sup> shows a twelve-sided polygonal structure with a tapered stage that projects a third of the way into the yard or pit of the playhouse. The theatre would hold up to 220 persons, 139 persons in the pit sitting on benches, 36 persons in the first gallery and 45 in the second gallery.

After completing his *Circular Shakespearian Theatre* design, Cret traveled to New York in mid-May of 1929 to show Folger his fourth set of plans. After viewing Cret's latest design of Shakespeare's Globe Playhouse Folger decided to ruminate on them for a few days before responding. In a letter to Trowbridge a few days later, Folger shared his decision to abandon a reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse. Folger regretted abandoning the Globe reconstruction, but thought the Theatre's circular design took away too much space from the Old Reading Room. In his letter, Folger explained that "we must try to keep in mind that our enterprise is, first of all, a Library, and while there are other features which we hope will be interesting to the public, that of the 'Library' is all important."<sup>491</sup> Folger's second reason for his change of heart was fear of criticism of a reconstructed Globe Playhouse:

I have read again all the literature I have about the theatre construction and am inclined to think that any effort to reproduce permanently any one of the theatres known by name will involve too much risk of criticism, based on what is now known about such theatre, or may later be discovered about it. Had we not, therefore, better try to construct a theatre which will suggest the several Elizabethan theatres, in a general way, rather than try to copy simply

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<sup>490</sup> Paul Cret, *Part Plans: Circular Shakespeare Theatre*, Archives: Cret Drawings, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>491</sup> Henry C. Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York 20 May 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

one of them? – that is, better be indefinite, and design something which will incorporate features from several of the theatres, and can be described simply as a theatre such as was used during the Shakespeare period.<sup>492</sup>

Trowbridge agreed with Folger's change of heart, and shared with Cret that Folger's decision "strikes me as being a wise attitude to take."<sup>493</sup> In response to Trowbridge's letter, Cret compared their position in attempting to reconstruct the Globe Playhouse "as an architect would be if asked to build an American theatre without the use of complete data."<sup>494</sup> Like Trowbridge, Cret felt disinclined to invite controversy over a realized reconstruction of one specific playhouse. Cret expressed confidence that he would be able to make guests to the Folger Elizabethan Theatre feel enveloped by "surroundings which will re-create for them the Shakespearean atmosphere and this is the essential."<sup>495</sup> In "Reconstructions of the Globe: A Retrospective," Gabriel Egan observes that the reconstruction of the Globe Playhouse in London interestingly follows the same guideline – that of designing a theatre that

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<sup>492</sup> Henry C. Folger, New York to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York 20 May 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1. This letter in the Folger Collection is rather interesting. Alexander Trowbridge donated the originals of Henry Folger's letters pertaining to the design and construction of the library to the FSL. This letter is the only one viewed that is not a signed original penned by Henry Folger, but rather a copy of Folger's letter typed on Trowbridge's personal stationary. When Trowbridge archived this letter in the Folger Shakespeare Library he added an undated handwritten note that read, "This shows the origin of the idea to give up any attempt to reproduce the Globe or the Fortune or any one of the old theaters." The placement of this written comment by Trowbridge is a testament to how important he felt it known that the Folger Shakespeare Theatre was not a reconstruction of any one particular theatre from history.

<sup>493</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York to Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, 22 May 1929, Box 58A, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>494</sup> Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 25 May 1929, Box 58A, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>495</sup> Paul Cret, Philadelphia to Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York, 25 May 1929, Box 58A, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

creates the *feeling* of the original, if not the original itself.<sup>496</sup> Ultimately, Folger's change of heart allowed the project to progress as Cret was free to "move ahead with full speed" on working drawings for the Library.<sup>497</sup>

After leaving the notion of rebuilding the Globe Playhouse behind, nothing suggests that Cret, Trowbridge and Folger threw out the proverbial baby with the bathwater. They had not entirely discarded Cret's first design submitted to Folger in December 1928, which was modeled after the Fortune Theatre – a design Folger had praised. Folger's dissatisfaction with Cret's original Fortune Theatre plan developed only after he began to think the Globe Theater would have been a better choice to reconstruct as it had a closer tie to the professional life of Shakespeare. Since it appears Folger was satisfied with the footprint of Cret's Fortune-inspired design, then the logical move after discarding the Globe Theatre reconstruction was to return to Cret's Fortune Theatre design.

Evidence that supports this suggestion is provided in a letter Trowbridge sent to Cret explaining Folger's position on the project. Trowbridge explained to Cret that Folger's recent decision to forego the Globe Theatre reconstruction meant that Folger would be happy with a Theatre that fit within "the walls of your main plan," meaning the 'A' plan, based on the Fortune Theatre and approved by Folger in December 1928. On June 4, 1929, Folger requested that Cret prepare new drawings incorporating the changes in the Theatre's design discussed up to that point.<sup>498</sup> Less

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<sup>496</sup> Gabriel Egan, "Reconstructions of the Globe: A Retrospective," *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 13. My emphasis.

<sup>497</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge, New York to Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia, 22 May 1929, Box 58A, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, 1.

<sup>498</sup> Henry C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, 4 June 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

than a month later, on July 1 Cret provided detailed drawings of the Theatre and shortly thereafter the design of the theatre is considered an “approved subject.”<sup>499</sup>

By November 4, 1929, Cret finished drafting blue prints of the Library building, and they were submitted to the city of Washington for approval in December 1929.<sup>500</sup> On January 24, 1930, the office of the Engineer Commissioner of the Government of the District of Columbia reported that the current jury of The Architects Advisory Council had approved Cret’s plans for the Folger Shakespeare Library, noting that it was an “[o]utstanding among buildings of its type.”<sup>501</sup> From blueprints for the builder dated September 24, 1930, the Theatre ‘footprint’ designed and described in notes as based on the Fortune Theatre contract and submitted by Cret in December 1928 to Henry Folger survives to this day.<sup>502</sup>

### Section 3: Cret’s Sources and Design

Because Cret did not usually date his notes, it is difficult to pin down the timing and order of his thoughts during the development of the design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. But what is certain is his careful reliance upon research conducted on English early modern theatres. In 1928, when first considering the project challenge – that the theatre be “Elizabethan, if possible,” Cret narrowed down his choices of theatres to the public playhouses of the Globe and the Fortune, the second Blackfriars Theatre, and temporary playing areas in great halls where

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<sup>499</sup> Paul P. Cret, “Section Toward Stage” and “Longitudinal Section, Lecture Room,” July 1, 1929, Cret Collection, Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

<sup>500</sup> Paul P. Cret, “Main Floor Plan, Folger Shakespeare Library, 4 November 1929, Architectural Drawings for the Folger Shakespeare Library, Library of Congress, Washington.

<sup>501</sup> Henry C. Folger to Paul Cret, 28 January 1930, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. Chapter Three will discuss in more detail how the Library’s plans were approved by D. C. officials.

<sup>502</sup> Paul P. Cret, “First Floor Plan, Details of Lecture Room,” Sheet 223, 24 September 1930, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



“itinerant players give performances.”<sup>503</sup> Of the last choice, Cret did not go into any details as to why he came to an unfavorable opinion of this type of playing place – other than commenting that it was “[n]ot so advisable.”<sup>504</sup> It can be presumed that a realized design following this type of space would have been too close in style to the gallery space he was also designing along the front of the Library building.

At some point in the design process, Cret questioned how the English early modern theatre developed the arcades or galleries in the house of the theatre. Next to this question in his notes, Cret wrote a simple phrase, “[s]ee old inn-yards.”<sup>505</sup> It must be remembered that Cret had not worked on a project before with such special requirements as the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Indeed, before joining the project, Cret had never reconstructed an English early modern theatre, so he had no frame of reference for how such a theatre functioned or why it looked the way it did. Cret’s notations about inns are drawn from his consulting Joseph Quincy Adams’s *Shakespearean Playhouses*, a source sent to Cret by Folger a few months into their collaboration together. From this source he notes that inn-yards were equipped with temporary stages and benches were used in the galleries.<sup>506</sup> Also within this publication, Adams provides a drawing of the White Hart Inn showing two galleries surrounding its courtyard, but Cret did not copy the drawing anywhere in his notes as appeared to be his habit when a pictorial source sparked his interest. When listing possible models to follow for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre design, Cret’s notes

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<sup>503</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>504</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>505</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>506</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

only reference the courtyards of inns concerns the architectural element of the galleries that allowed access to guests' rooms. He notes that these elevated platforms were considered to be a precursor to the galleries found in the later developed public outdoor playhouses and private indoor theatres.

Cret felt a reconstruction of the second Blackfriars Theatre – an indoor private theatre of the early modern period in England also associated with Shakespeare's acting company – would be speculative but possibly more suitable to the parameters of constructing an indoor theatre within the Library building. Consulting William Archer and W. J. Lawrence's chapter in *Shakespeare's England: An Account of Life and Manners During his Age*, Cret noted that Shakespeare had a stake in the second Blackfriars, as he did in the Globe playhouse – information that could have raised Folger's regard for the idea of reconstructing the Blackfriars. Yet, Cret incorrectly notes from this source that the second Blackfriars is “mentioned more than the Globe in the *Folios*.”<sup>507</sup> What Archer and Lawrence were actually saying in their chapter was that the second Blackfriars was of ultimate importance, evidenced by more than fifty quarto editions of plays from the period having the second Blackfriars theatre listed on their title pages – more than double the number of quarto edition of plays that similarly listed the Globe playhouse.<sup>508</sup> Cret's confusion on this matter may be attributed to his knowledge of the large number of Shakespeare's First Folios owned by Folger, and that this tidbit of information, albeit incorrect, would appeal to the collector. Cret noted other information about the second Blackfriars: that the theatre

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<sup>507</sup> [My emphasis] Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>508</sup> William Archer and W. J. Lawrence, “The Playhouse,” in *Shakespeare's England: an Account of Life and Manners During his Age*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916); 291.

had three galleries, that the first gallery was positioned slightly above the Pit, that the theatre measured 46 by 66 feet, that the lower floor was perhaps 52 feet square, and that the room was paved and contained gothic windows.

As it has stood since the Library's 1932 founding, the Folger Elizabethan Theatre contains three galleries. The top gallery is used for storage rather than seating audience members, the first gallery is positioned slightly higher than the Pit, and the floor of the Pit is paved. Cret noted how information about the number of galleries from this source differed from Joseph Quincy Adams' argument that the second Blackfriars only contained two galleries.<sup>509</sup> This conflicting information may have fueled the debate between Folger and Cret as to whether Cret's Fortune inspired design should have included two or three galleries. Finally, Cret noted the number doors that were on the English early modern stage, another conflicting point between scholars of the period. Cret gleaned Archer and Lawrence's opinion that the inner stage was to have two doors or more and that one of the doors was probably at the end of the rear stage. In addition, he references Adams' inclusion of a drawing of the Duke's Theater in 1673 showing a production of *Empress of Morocco* by Elkanah Settle.<sup>510</sup> Adams' drawing suggests the method of using the rear stage mainly for scenery, and alternating the use of the outer and inner Restoration stage for playing areas. Adams supplies this drawing to illustrate how the productions at the second

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<sup>509</sup> Paul Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre," 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>510</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917); opposite 110.

Blackfriars, and consequently inherited by Restoration era stages, must have employed different playing areas within the theatre.<sup>511</sup>

Adams' espousing of the Principal of Alternation, the theory supported by a reliance on the textual study of the period's plays, appears to have appealed to Cret. Alternation theory developed from study of early modern play-texts, an action that suggested drama of this period followed a pattern of first setting one scene out of doors followed by another scene set indoors. Scholars such as John Cranford Adams, Joseph Quincy Adams and theatre practitioner William Poel, to name a few, accepted this theory and designed playhouses that would accommodate this textual structure, even though George F. Reynolds disproved this theory in his 1904-5 article "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, Part I."<sup>512</sup> Richard Hosley's fascinating "The Origins of the So-Called Elizabethan Multiple Stage" posits that most evidence used by 'reconstructionists' to lead them to build stages with an inner below and above (as well as a third story 'music' room) do so mainly because of theatrical staging practices developed during the nineteenth century and practiced into the twentieth. So, the staging practices of a reconstructionist's own era unduly influence their design version of the Fortune or the Globe or any other early modern theatre. Hosley's compelling argument illustrates that an historian or reconstructionist should recognize their own biases (and also, hopefully acknowledge them). As early as 1911, theatre historian G. F. Reynolds identified in his article, "What We Know of the Elizabethan Stage," that, "[e]very investigator seems dominated by certain

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<sup>511</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917); 110.

<sup>512</sup> George F. Reynolds, "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging, Part I," *Modern Philology*, II (1904-05); 581-614.

assumptions, sometimes apparently unconscious, and, one suspects, assumptions too which are sometimes ill founded.”<sup>513</sup>

From measurements provided from Archer, Lawrence and Adams, Cret sketched a possible arrangement of the second Blackfriars in the form of a ground plan and elevation drawing that is surprisingly similar to the ground plan and elevation of the fully realized Folger Elizabethan Theatre.<sup>514</sup> Cret also consulted Ashley Thorndike’s *Shakespeare’s Theater*, paying particular notice to Thorndike’s supposition that in the private theatres and later public theatres incorporated a wider curtained rear stage, less projection of the stage into the yard or pit of the theater and proscenium doors placed on the bias.<sup>515</sup> Cret used all of these elements in his design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, all of which – according to Thorndike – likewise were found in the second Blackfriars and the Fortune Playhouse. Also from Thorndike, Cret noted that the placement of doors on either side of the inner below opening probably differed by theatre space and that the windows and balconies over these doors must be seen by the audience and by actors standing in the inner stage area (and vice versa).<sup>516</sup> Again, Cret incorporates these details into the final design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. In addition, Cret notes from Thorndike’s work that the hut, pillars and shade would disappear in the private theatres while the rest of the

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<sup>513</sup> G. F. Reynolds, “What We Know of the Elizabethan Stage,” *Modern Philology* 9 no. 1 (July, 1911); 65.

<sup>514</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>515</sup> Ashley Thorndike, *Shakespeare’s Theater*, (New York: Macmillan, 1916); 129.

<sup>516</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia and Ashley Thorndike, *Shakespeare’s Theater*, 91.

stage remained the same as the public playhouses.<sup>517</sup> Cret's decision to retain these architectural elements in the realized design of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre is significant, for it suggests his adherence to reconstructing an outdoor playhouse (like the Fortune) rather than an indoor theatre or inn-yard theatre.

When first tasked to design an 'Elizabethan' theatre for the Folger's Shakespeare memorial project, Cret considered aspects of a number of theatres. When first researching information about the Globe Playhouse, Cret relied upon a number of sources to gather information. In addition, Cret's summation of the viability of following the design of the Globe covered a number of topics. He noted that the size of the space allotted the Theatre within the Library was limited. If the Globe configuration was followed, it would have required a reduction in the Old Reading Room's size.<sup>518</sup> Cret also considered the problem debated by scholars whether the Globe was polygonal in shape or circular, commenting that laymen [not architects] were more likely to call the structure round when actually meaning polygonal.<sup>519</sup> In addition, he recognized the debate surrounding De Witt's drawing of the Swan Theater, which showed the interior of the structure to be round.<sup>520</sup> Cret's Globe inspired design requested by Folger in April 1929 shows that Cret decided to follow the argument that the Globe was indeed polygonal, for he chose to design a twelve sided structure. Cret's Globe inspired design closely resembles Victor Albright's

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<sup>517</sup> Paul Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre," 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia and Ashley Thorndike, *Shakespeare's Theatre*; 89.

<sup>518</sup> Paul Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre," 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>519</sup> Paul Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre," 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>520</sup> Paul Cret, "Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre," 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

“Shakespearian Stage, ” copying the ground plans and elevation drawing of Albright’s conjectural reconstruction in his own notes.<sup>521</sup> Interestingly, as Ashley Thorndike noted in *Shakespeare’s Theatre*, Albright used specifications for the stage from the Fortune Theatre contract and placed them within a circular playhouse to devise his Globe reconstruction.<sup>522</sup>

When summing up his opinion on which type of theatre to design for Henry Folger in 1928, Cret chose the Fortune Playhouse because it “fits better our plan – better seats, less costly, will look less like a circus in account of circus tent.”<sup>523</sup>

Cret’s note requires further explanation, however. It appears Cret thought that if he draped a velum in a polygonal structure, the result would be that it would have the negative effect of making an audience feel like they were sitting in the interior of a circus tent rather than an outdoor theatre. It appears Cret favored the Ashley Thorndike’s analysis of the basic structure of English early modern theatres, calling Thorndike’s *Shakespeare’s Theatre* the “best.”<sup>524</sup> Apparently Cret appreciated Thorndike’s analysis of the Globe reconstruction proposed by Victor Albright. Cret notes Thorndike’s comments that there could be many doors in the façade of the stage, and the importance of the placement of the windows in relationship with the upper balcony and the rest of the Theatre. Cret states in his notes that “this agrees

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<sup>521</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>522</sup> Ashley Thorndike, *Shakespeare’s Theatre*, (New York: Macmillan, 1916); 87.

<sup>523</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.2 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>524</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

still more with my theatre.”<sup>525</sup> He includes a drawing which is perhaps the first sketch of the stage of what would become the Folger Shakespeare Theatre.<sup>526</sup>

Cret’s appreciation for Albright’s design solution may have inspired him when faced with the later problem of devising a theatre that invoked the spirit of an English early modern theatre and would avoid any possible controversy. What is certain is Cret’s lack of appreciation for Archer’s reconstruction of the Fortune Theatre, having discovered Archer’s mistake in his placement of the stairs from Thorndike’s *Shakespeare’s Theatre*.<sup>527</sup>

#### Subsection 1: Conclusion

The Folger Shakespeare Library website currently describes the design of the Elizabethan Theatre thusly:

The intimate Elizabethan Theatre is the setting for Folger Theatre productions. With its three-tiered wooden balconies, carved oak columns, and half-timbered facade, the theater evokes the courtyard of an English Renaissance inn. Overhead, a canopy represents the sky. In Shakespeare’s day, such inns often served as playhouses for traveling groups of players, who performed on a raised platform at one end while spectators gathered in the yard and on the balconies above.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>526</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>527</sup> Paul Cret, “Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C., Studies for Shakespeare Theatre,” 226.1 (1931), University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.

<sup>528</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library Website: <http://www.folger.edu/Content/Whats-On/Folger-Theatre/About-Folger-Theatre/> Viewed 2 January 2012.



This description of the Theatre is very similar to the one found in the 2002 *Infinite Variety: Exploring the Folger Shakespeare Library*. Its presentation here helps to illustrate how the Library continues to view the architectural design of the theatre. In light of the presentation of the previous evidence, the Library could consider re-drafting this description to take into account the specificity of research of English early modern theatres Paul Cret drew from in order to design the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Modifying and amplifying the description of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre's design would not impede any of the public programs currently offered at the Theatre. On the contrary, it would enhance the public's experience, whether visiting the space for a performance of a play by Shakespeare or a reading from the O. B. Hardison Poetry Series. Since the Folger Shakespeare Library is an institution dedicated to research and its creative utilization, it should, ultimately, acknowledge and embrace the full story of this Theatre project that resulted from such a textured collaboration between two architects and a book collector, a partnership that created such a unique playing place in America.

### Chapter 3: Using the Theatre – the First Thirty-Eight Years

As the Folger Shakespeare Library neared completion, a local resident arrived on the construction site and asked to be shown around the building. The superintendent of construction, William B. Clemmer, led the nearly eighty-year-old man through various rooms of the building before ending the tour in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Upon seeing the stage, the gentleman produced a volume of Shakespeare and requested, “I should like to read from this stage.” Clemmer agreed, and the visitor, finding the page specially bookmarked for the occasion, began midway through Shakespeare’s epic poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, “O Opportunity, Thy Guilt is Great!”

The visitor was Henry D. Fruit, vice president and librarian of the National Shakespeare Federation, and in reading that line he became first performer on the Folger Elizabethan Theatre stage. A Washingtonian since 1910, Fruit apparently held the largest collection of Shakespeare in Washington, D.C. before the Folger Shakespeare Library opened.<sup>529</sup> Fruit’s selection of material to baptize the Folger stage seems a strange choice to make, rather than – as one might expect – an excerpt from one of the Bard’s plays.<sup>530</sup> Where Fruit chose to begin his recitation is even stranger. He begins reading aloud during Lucrece’s lamentation of ‘opportunity,’ once violently raped by Sextus Tarquinius. From Shakespeare:

O Opportunity, Thy Guilt is Great!”

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<sup>529</sup> “Admirer of Shakespeare First to Read in Theatre,” *Washington Post* 22 April 1932; MS3.

<sup>530</sup> Two years earlier, Fruit, along with a colleague from the National Shakespeare Federation, broke into the Folger Library construction site in order to observe Shakespeare’s birthday with a photo-op wreath-laying ceremony at one corner of the building. See Thomas W. McKnew, Washington to A. G. Welsh, c/o H. C. Folger, New York 22 April 1930 and 23 April 1930, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

‘Tis thou that executes the traitor’s treason:  
Thou set’st the wolf where he the lamb may get;  
Whoever plots the sin, thou ‘point’st the season;  
‘Tis thou that spurn’st at right, at law, at reason;  
And in thy shady cell, where none may spy him,  
Sits Sin, to seize the souls that wander by him.<sup>531</sup>

The Folger Elizabethan Theatre would not be utilized for a full production of a play until nearly seventeen years after its founding. From 1932 to 1942, the Folger sponsored an annual event for invited guests celebrating Shakespeare’s birth. Mrs. Folger helped organize and finance dramatic readings of Shakespeare scheduled in 1934 and 1935, the only events in the first decade of the Library’s existence that focused on Shakespeare as a dramatist.<sup>532</sup> Other lectures from this period discuss Shakespeare from a literary or historical perspective, until 1948 when Thomas Marc Parrott’s lecture “Hamlet on the Stage” treated Shakespeare as a dramatist.<sup>533</sup> The following year, a full production of *Julius Caesar* was produced on the Folger Elizabethan Theatre’s stage by the student group the Amherst Masquers.

After this production, the Theatre was not utilized again for plays during Louis B. Wright’s term as Director, which ended in 1968. O. B. Hardison, Jr.’s appointment as Director the following year ushered in a new era at the Library.

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<sup>531</sup> William Shakespeare, “The Rape of Lucrece,” lines 876 – 882, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, G. Blakemore Evans, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974); 1732.

<sup>532</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, *The Folger Memorial Shakespeare Library: A Report of Progress, 1931-1941*, (Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1942); 56.

<sup>533</sup> Parrot’s lecture was later developed into a book. See Thomas Marc Parrot, *Hamlet on the Stage*, (New York: J. Norton, 1953.)

Hardison (1928 – 1990), who specialized in Elizabethan literature and the history of literary criticism, received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. He accepted the Directorship of the Library after teaching English at the University of Tennessee, Princeton, and the University of North Carolina.<sup>534</sup> During Hardison's term, new public programs were developed, including the formation of the Folger Theatre Group. Even before founding the professional theatre company, Hardison arranged for the Library to host three performances offered free to the public of medieval plays from a Mary Baldwin College drama group in December 1968.<sup>535</sup> Until Hardison, for nearly the first forty years of the Theatre's existence it sat unutilized for productions.

With this in mind, one may contemplate another reading of Lucrece's words spoken by Henry Fruit on the stage of the unfinished Folger Elizabethan Theatre in early 1932. The theatre space offered great 'opportunity' for the staging of Shakespeare's plays in a dynamic environment, an Elizabethan-style theatre. Furthermore, the 'guilt' lamented by Lucrece in Fruit's reading developed over the years, the result of the Theatre not being used for staging these types of productions. But in order to better understand this analogy, one must examine the written history of the Theatre in the first forty years of the Library's existence.

### Section 1: The Folgers' Intentions

As clarified in Chapter 2, evidence suggests that the Folger Elizabethan Theatre was included in the Folger Shakespeare Library to provide a space where

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<sup>534</sup> Dorothy E. Mason, Elaine Fowler and Philip Knachel, "The Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.: A Brief History" *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* Vol. 69/70 (1969/70); 370.

<sup>535</sup> O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director, 1968-69*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1970); 38.

Shakespeare's plays could be produced utilizing early modern production practices. Before his death, Henry Folger shared with Amherst President Stanley Pease that he wanted the Theatre to be used for plays.<sup>536</sup> In 1931, Paul P. Cret, architect of the Library, wrote that Henry Folger intended to provide "a small playhouse where Shakespeare's plays can be adequately performed."<sup>537</sup> In 1933, Cret further explained the existence of the Theatre when writing it was intended for the use of "the presentation of Shakespeare's plays in their original staging and for lectures or concerts."<sup>538</sup>

After the Library opened, Emily Folger attempted to found a school of elocution in the Theatre, which could have served to teach the art of speaking the text of Shakespeare's verse well. Mrs. Folger's choice to head the school, Samuel Arthur King, was trained as an actor and acted in the theatre before turning to teaching as a career. The Shakespeare recitals King gave upon Emily Folger's request appear to have been examples of teaching Shakespeare through performance. The school could have served as a stepping-stone of sorts, toward mounting full theatrical productions.

On another occasion, the Folger Library was approached with a proposal for original practices productions of Shakespeare to be filmed in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.<sup>539</sup> These films were then to be sold or rented to colleges and/or high schools serving as 'visual education' in the production of Shakespeare's plays in the Elizabethan manner. A subsequent version of this plan proposed the formation of the

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<sup>536</sup> Henry Folger, n.d., Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>537</sup> Paul P. Cret, Philadelphia to Emily Folger, New York 10 January 1931, Paul Philippe Cret Collection, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

<sup>538</sup> Paul P. Cret, "The Building," in *The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 32.

<sup>539</sup> "Amherst Trustees Minutes, Folger Shakespeare Library Committee," 12 June 1934. Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library, Amherst.

first program in the United States that focused on training actors in early modern production practices. Had these programs developed at the Library, they would have served as another method of researching Shakespeare and disseminating that research to a larger portion of the public. Furthermore, these research and educational programs that focused on performance would have complemented the work of scholars that took place in the Library's Old Reading Room.

Unfortunately, none of these proposed activities for the Theatre occurred. Some have charged those running the Library, the Amherst trustees and the various Directors, with responsibility for the Theatre's underutilization, and some have even gone so far to suggest that the Library held an anti-theatrical bias.<sup>540</sup> This chapter does neither, instead seeking to examine the development of the Library's policy for the theatre from 1929 – after the death of Henry Folger, when the Amherst College Trustees were made aware of Folger's bequest – to the appointment of O. B. Hardison, Jr. as Director of the Library in 1969. It also examines the explanations provided over the years by Library officials to explain the non-use of the Theatre during this time period.

These explanations have changed over the years, but their use appears to have cultivated another myth of origin: the story that Henry Folger made sure that productions could not be held in the Theatre. On the surface, this statement does not seem to make sense. Why would the person who desired to include a fully functioning Elizabethan-style theatre in the Folger Shakespeare Library ensure that theatrical productions would not be produced in the space? Teasing out this myth,

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<sup>540</sup> Christopher Scully, "Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses," (Dissertation, Tufts University, 2008); 171-2.

examining how it developed and how it was used reveals Library officials found it difficult to reconcile the existence of the Theatre as a space intended for theatrical productions within the Library building.

The first discussions of the Theatre's purpose that appeared in the press before the Library opened contained inconsistencies.<sup>541</sup> For example, in 1930 Lucy Salamanca described a practical use for the space, "as a lecture room or gathering place for scholarly talks and discussions."<sup>542</sup> A year later, a 1931 *New York Times Magazine* article enthusiastically reported the Theatre would host productions of Shakespearean plays starring famous modern actors; the productions would even broadcast by radio and filmed for distribution to movie houses.<sup>543</sup>

After Joseph Quincy Adams was appointed Head of Research at the Library in 1932, he wrote about the function of the building, omitting any mention of the Theatre. Instead he used esoteric and grand phrasing to describe the new institution, "[t]he Library is thus more than a mere library; it is also a museum of the Golden Age of Elizabeth, and a memorial to the influence that Shakespeare has exerted upon the world's culture." This example helps to illustrate how the Library framed its early mission, one that rejected theatrical engagement. The conjectural explanations offered by the press about the creation of the Theatre prior to the Library's opening

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<sup>541</sup> Christopher Scully summarizes the history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre "Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses," but does not appear to have consulted primary sources from the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. From newspaper and magazine articles and other secondary source material he identifies the Folger's internal battles over the ideal usage of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. See Christopher Scully, "Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses." Dissertation: Tufts University, 2008; 163-178.

<sup>542</sup> Lucy Salamanca, "America Honors Shakespeare the Poet: Unlike Stratford's Tribute to the Dramatist," *New York Times Magazine*, 24 August 24, 1930; 16.

<sup>543</sup> Eunice Fuller Barnard, "Shakespeare's Fame in the New World: In the Great Folger Library, Now Nearing Completion, the Modern Arts Illumine the Art of the Elizabethan Bard," *New York Times Magazine* 4 October 1931; 9.

abruptly gave way to a new interpretation of the Library and its mission – one similar to that of Adams’ example above, all but negating the very existence of the Theatre space within the Library building. The Library’s mission was now firmly limited to the study of Shakespeare through advanced scholars’ utilization of the Folger’s collection of Shakespeariana.

Others promoted this mission as well. Stanley King, trustee and President of Amherst College from 1932 to 1946, described Henry Folger as possessing a literary interest that centered on Shakespeare.<sup>544</sup> Amherst trustees and other Library officials described the Library’s mission in 1933 in a similar way – that the founders’ gift should be “used for the advancement of literary study in the United States.”<sup>545</sup> The rest of the introduction remarked on the importance of the Library’s collection. The Theatre, along with the Exhibition Hall, is only briefly mentioned in the last sentence of the introduction as open to the general public during weekdays.<sup>546</sup>

Understandably, the assumption developed that Folger only held a literary or historical interest in Shakespeare since he collected so many books and manuscripts on the subject and founded an institution with the name the Folger Shakespeare *Library*. Yet, the inclusion of a fully functioning theatre modeled after a theatre space from the days of Shakespeare begs the question why the space was included in the building. What purpose, or purposes, could it serve? By 1945, Adams would explicitly take a stand on this question. In a 1945 *Dramatics* magazine article, Adams

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<sup>544</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 1.

<sup>545</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); vii. Considering the line-up of scholars’ lectures scheduled during the first ten years of the library’s existence, this policy was overwhelmingly followed.

<sup>546</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); x.



explicitly lays out his and the Amherst trustee's opinions of using the Theatre. In essence they felt, "strongly that the Folger Library is a Library and not a theatre, and that the playhouse is itself an exhibit rather than a workshop or laboratory."<sup>547</sup> Three years later, in 1948, *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account* explained why the Theatre had not seen one theatrical production in sixteen years attributing it to, "the small seating capacity of the Theatre – less than three hundred. No first class production can afford to play to three hundred spectators, and nothing less than a first class production would be acceptable."<sup>548</sup> Adams passed away in 1946, leaving his Assistant Director James McManaway to serve as Acting Director until Louis B. Wright's appointment by the Amherst Trustees as Director of the Library in 1948. The use of a different reason between the 1945 *Dramatics* magazine article and the 1948 *Brief Account* to explain why the Theatre had been 'dark' for so many years was likely due to the Library's change in leadership.

Before the Folger Shakespeare Library opened, Eunice Fuller Barnard predicted in a 1931 *New York Times Magazine* article that the Folger Elizabethan Theatre will be the, "most popular probably of all the objects of this vast expenditure, and most far-reaching in its influence."<sup>549</sup> Considering the first few decades of the Library's existence, Barnard, unfortunately, could not have been more wrong. As mentioned above, during Adams and King's tenure at the Library, no productions would be mounted in the theatre. After thirteen years in operation, Alan Schneider

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<sup>547</sup> Alan Schneider, "Shakespeare on Capitol Hill," *Dramatics* vol. 16, no. 7, (April 1945); 4.

<sup>548</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account* (Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1948); 7.

<sup>549</sup> Eunice Fuller Barnard, "Shakespeare's Fame in the New World: In the Great Folger Library, Now Nearing Completion, the Modern Arts Illumine the Art of the Elizabethan Bard," *New York Times Magazine*, 4 October 1931; 9.

from *Dramatics* magazine interviewed Adams about the use of the theatre – this interview deserves closer analysis. After asking Adams how the Theatre is used, Schneider reports:

Although equipped and suitable for actual production, the playhouse has never been used for this purpose. Lectures, song-recitals, readings – but no Hamlet or Lady Macbeth has ever paced its boards. The director of the Library, Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams, and the trustees of Amherst College, in whose hands administration of the building was placed by Mr. Folger, feel strongly that the Folger Library is a Library and not a theatre, and that the playhouse is itself an exhibit rather than a workshop or laboratory...[w]hat more fitting memorial could Shakespeare have had than a reconstructed playhouse dedicated to the production of his plays! After all, the Bard of Avon and the world belongs on a stage and not in a Library – even if Mr. Folger did not feel that way.<sup>550</sup>

Here Schneider assumed that Henry Folger held the same sentiments as Adams and the Amherst trustees regarding the Theatre's use. Schneider fully accepted Adams and Amherst trustees' opinions that the Theatre space should be viewed as an exhibit occasionally used for informal meetings, and as such Schneider does not focus his condemnation on them. He places blame on Henry Folger for the Library's non-use of the Theatre. Schneider's last sentence even condemns the founder for acquiring the Library's collection in the first place. Like others, Schneider had difficulty

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<sup>550</sup> Alan Schneider, "Shakespeare on Capitol Hill," *Dramatics* 16, no. 7, (April 1945); 4.

reconciling the non-use of the Theatre when it actually was built “equipped and suitable for actual production.”

As more fully described in Chapter Two, the space is a fully functioning theatre. The Library’s architect Paul P. Cret described the arrangement of the theatre space within the Library building in 1933 as a theatre with, “dressing rooms, property-rooms, a lounge for the public, and a separate entrance vestibule.”<sup>551</sup> In the early planning stages of the Theatre Henry Folger even proposed a separate entrance to the Library for admission to the Theatre wing. During the design process he also suggested moving the entire building further east on the plot of land he purchased on Capitol Hill so that “theatre patrons” could enjoy easier access to the building.<sup>552</sup> Architect Paul Cret specifically discusses in the 1933 publication *The Folger Shakespeare Library* that the Theatre was meant to be used for “the presentation of Shakespeare’s plays in their original staging, and for lectures or concerts.”<sup>553</sup> This is the same publication mentioned above in which the forward, written by Library officials, gives scant mention to the very existence of the Theatre. Cret’s particular choice of words suggests that theatrical productions were the first priority in activities intended for the theatre space whereas lectures and concerts would be auxiliary in nature. A letter written by Henry Folger during the planning stages of the Library also suggests this. When asked if the theatre should be equipped with a projector to show movies, Folger emphatically answers, “[n]o! The theatre is to show the

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<sup>551</sup> Paul Cret, “The Building” in *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 32.

<sup>552</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, 13 February 1929, Box 58A, Folger Collection, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>553</sup> Paul Cret, “The Building” in *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); 32.

conditions under which Elizabethan plays were presented, primarily, and any other use by us will be supplemental.”<sup>554</sup>

The most compelling evidence illustrating how Henry Folger envisioned the theatre to be used has lain in the Folger Archives for decades. Shortly after Joseph Quincy Adams’ appointment of Director of Research in June 1931, he received from Amherst President Arthur Stanley Pease a note written in Henry Folger’s handwriting. In this notation, Folger laid out how he desired the research institution to develop. The page was broken down into three separate categories; “additions to book funds”, “research”, and “extension.” Folger left no other instruction for additions to book funds. Under research he listed “publications” and monetary amounts for research “fellowships”: four \$3,000 fellowships for professors, five \$1,800 fellowships for graduate students and one \$2,200 fellowship for foreign students. In the extension category Folger listed both “lectures” and “plays.”<sup>555</sup> Although Adams described Folger’s notation as of “unquestionable value,” it was locked away in the vaults of the Library in a box dedicated to the correspondences of Emily Folger rather than promoted and followed.

If Folger desired the theater to be used for lectures and plays, specifically original practices productions of Shakespeare’s plays as described by Paul Cret, how did such an apparent disconnect develop between the founder’s wishes and the policies instilled by Amherst trustees and Library officials? The story, once parsed out,

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<sup>554</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, 10 August 1929, Folger Collection, Box 57, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>555</sup> Handwritten note by Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, D.C. 20 October 1931 and Handwritten clipping by Henry Folger, [n.d.], Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

explains the attitude adopted by Library officials towards the Theatre during King's and Adam's tenure at the Library.

Due to Folger's unexpected death he never explicitly laid out a full plan of operation for the theatre while he was still alive. Folger suffering heart failure after an operation in June 1930, two weeks after the first cornerstone of the Library building was laid, prohibited the full development and later, transference of any formal plans. The abrupt manner in which the Library project was handed off to the Amherst Trustees after Folger's death contributed to the ambiguity about the inclusion of the Theatre in the Library. Stanley King wrote in 1950 in *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* that Amherst Trustees were made aware of Folger's bequest after his death in 1930 in a *New York Times* notice listing the public contents of Folger's will.<sup>556</sup> King, who in 1930 served as an Amherst trustee before appointed President of the College in 1932, traveled to the nation's capital shortly after reading the *Times* notice to "immediately assume responsibility in behalf of the Trustees of the College."<sup>557</sup> Before his death, Henry and Emily Folger had appointed William Adams Slade from the Library of Congress as Director of the Operations of the Folger Shakespeare Library and chairman of the Department of English at Cornell University, Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams, as Director of Research. King, Slade and Adams, along with architects William Trowbridge and Paul Cret and co-founder Emily Folger worked together in Henry Folger's absence to make sure the Library's founding day ceremony could be held less than two years later.

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<sup>556</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 3.

<sup>557</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 3

But the event that has created such abstruseness regarding the Folgers' intent for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre occurred approximately six months before Henry Folger's death. The James Baird Construction company broke ground on the site of the Library in January 1930 after receiving approval of the building's plans from the Building Office of the District of Columbia. A month earlier in December 1929 the building's design plans were submitted for approval to the Inspector of Buildings of the District of Columbia. J. W. McKnew, vice-president of Baird Construction, sent with the plans a letter requesting special consideration taken by the Inspector of one of the Theatre's design elements - the entry door connecting the entrance vestibule with the interior of the Theatre. Paul Cret's design incorporated a singular doorway, "surmounted by a relief showing children acting in a masque, inspired by an old wood carving," six feet in width separating the two spaces.<sup>558</sup> A common and expected design element of an English early modern playhouse is a single point of access, a component found in many reconstructions of public playhouses from this period. The District of Columbia's Building Code required, however, two side-by-side doorways to be implemented for "egress applicable to all theatres..."<sup>559</sup> McKnew stresses in his letter the importance of this singular doorway in their efforts to "create a true reproduction of what a Shakespearian Theatre actually looked like in the 17<sup>th</sup> century," and that the "Shakespearian design" is the "one express purpose of erecting this building."<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>558</sup> Cret, "The Building," in *The Folger Shakespeare Library*; 34.

<sup>559</sup> Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia, *Building Code of the District of Columbia*, 1 July 1925; 152.

<sup>560</sup> J. W. McKnew, Washington, D.C. to Inspector of Buildings, Washington, D.C. 24 December 1929, District of Columbia Government, D.C. Public Library Archives, 1898-present, Special Collections, Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library, Washington, D.C.

As a solution McKnew, representing Folger in his request, proposed that the building retain its singular door design based upon how many persons could fit into the theatre space and how the Library expected to use the ‘Lecture Room.’ From McKnew:

- (1) That the entire capacity of this Lecture Room or Exhibition Hall is only 282 persons, including the balcony.
- (2) That its purpose is not that of a theatre, and at no time will plays or performances be given for which admission will be charged.
- (3) That its purpose principally is an exhibition, and to be a true reproduction of what a Shakespearian theatre actually looked like at that period.
- (4) It is contemplated that assemblages of persons in the Lecture Room will be only at very rare occasions, and in all probabilities will not exceed two times per year.<sup>561</sup>

McKnew’s verbiage could suggest that the Folgers resigned the prospect of using the Theatre for theatrical productions in favor of retaining a more authentic treatment of Cret’s design of an Elizabethan-style theatre. When considering how the Theatre was used during King’s and Adam’s tenure at the Library, this was the course of action agreed upon and followed. Upon closer inspection, however, most of McKnew’s specifications contain an ‘out’ – the possibility for the Library to circumvent each

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<sup>561</sup> J. W. McKnew, Washington, D.C. to Inspector of Buildings, Washington, D.C. 24 December 1929, District of Columbia Government, D.C. Public Library Archives, 1898-present, Special Collections, Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library, Washington; 1.

stipulation in the future without threat of the Building Department stepping in to halt the Library's activities planned for the Theatre.

The first item mentioned by McKnew, the size of the theatre, is important. The District of Columbia Building Code applies to theatres with a seating capacity of three hundred or more persons. The theatre was designed to hold less than three hundred patrons, a feature discussed between the Library's architects and Henry Folger in early 1929.<sup>562</sup> This meant that plays or other programs potentially could have been held without fear of the Building Department monitoring the Library's activities. This was one of the chief reasons the theatre was officially renamed a Lecture Hall on the building's design plans rather than a Theatre. Next, the phrase "at no time will plays or performances be given for which admission will be charged" could read to mean that if plays were given in the Theatre no admission would be charged, again potentially limiting the D.C. Building Department's authority. Yet, there would have been ways to bypass this limitation such as creating a membership program for the public to subscribe in order to be invited to events (theatrical performances included) at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre or creating a fundraising campaign to provide Shakespearean performances to the public free of charge. Furthermore, while McKnew's use of the term 'exhibition' conjures a static employment of the theatre space whereby visitors would merely gaze upon an empty theatre, what better way to fully *exhibit* a theatre than by showing how it would be used in *performance*? If one looks to McKnew's coupling of the word 'exhibition' with that of 'principally' it suggests that the founders wanted the option to provide events for the public in the future even though concrete plans had yet to be developed,

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<sup>562</sup> This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.



and that theatrical performances would be a possible event considered. The Library would have been forced to be creative in how they presented the productions to the public, but McKnew's letter to the D. C. Building Department provided the opportunity that at some point in time the Theatre could have been used for the type of performances the Theatre was designed. Furthermore, McKnew's phrase 'it is contemplated' when referring to how often it was envisioned the theatre would be used suggests an open-ended possibility for the development of programs in the future. That at the time of letter's writing, even without fully realized proposals for the Theatre contemplated, Folger saw it pertinent to leave as much wiggle room possible for the future *possibility* of using the Theatre for activities beyond the time and scope regulated by the District of Columbia's Building Code. Finally, one must consider McKnew's phrase when describing the 'Lecture Room,' "[t]hat its purpose is not that of a theatre." This would seem to supersede any contention that the Folger's intended for theatrical productions to be held in the theatre. Yet, why did McKnew feel it necessary to add the qualifying phrase immediately after, "at no time will plays or performances be given for which admission will be charged?" If it's not a theatre, it's not a theatre, period. Why leave the possibility open for productions where the public may not be charged admission? Moreover, why outfit the theatre with dressing rooms in the basement and professional stage lighting equipment in the theatre? Why go to that added expense to include those amenities? These features are unnecessary for a building that is purely an exhibition and not for theatrical productions. A reasonable explanation is that the founders desired to toe the line of the law so that the Library's unique architectural design would be approved, but they

were also cognizant of retaining proprietary rights, however limiting they would be, over the use of the building in the future.

With McKnew's rider requesting special consideration, the Building Department approved the Library's building plans. Stanley King and Joseph Quincy Adams, along with other library officials, accepted the fate of the Theatre as sanctioned by the rider. As such, their treatment of the theatre space in subsequent publications makes sense, all but negating the existence of the Theatre. Additionally, they narrowly followed the stipulations presented in McKnew's letter whereby the theatre was treated as a permanent exhibition occasionally employed for scholarly lectures. Thus, the inception of the Folger-Contract myth was complete.<sup>563</sup>

## Section 2: Emily Folger's School of Elocution

Yet, one person involved in the Library project attempted to overcome these limiting parameters of the rider placed upon the Library's early mission. The surviving co-founder, Emily Folger, strove to develop different performance programs for the theatre space after the Library opened. Of these programs, some complied with the use limitations placed upon the space by McKnew's negotiations with the D.C. Building Department and one very ambitious plan that did not. Her struggle, worthy of analysis, is a testament of her tenacious spirit and an example of how the Theatre's myth of origin continues to direct attention away from significant events in the Theatre's history.

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<sup>563</sup> This is based on Andrew D. Brown's definition of myth as, "narratives or extended metaphors which incorporate organizational meanings derived from past activities," from Andrew D. Brown, "Politics, Symbolic Action and Myth Making in Pursuit of Legitimacy," *Organization Studies*, 15 No. 6 (1994); 863.

First, consideration must be given to Emily Folger's role as co-founder of the Library. Obviously, Henry Folger did not amass his collection of Shakespeariana alone. Emily Folger collaborated with her husband during their collecting quest in a number of ways. Of the numerous books and articles printed about the Folgers, however, many never discuss the work Emily Folger contributed to the project. Articles that discuss the Library printed during her lifetime or shortly thereafter often omit her contribution to the Library project or reduce her role to such a degree as to suggest she merely acted as an assistant.<sup>564</sup> In an effort to foreground her accomplishments, like a number of contemporary publications on the topic have done, it is helpful to highlight how she contributed to the development of the Library. During her graduate career Emily Folger developed a broad knowledge of Shakespearean studies, knowledge that culminated in a Master's Thesis on the topic of the true text of Shakespeare. The phrase 'true text' refers to Shakespeare's First Folio printed in 1623. Her thesis, housed in the Folger Collection at the Folger Shakespeare Library, is an attempt to record and decipher the variations contained in the printings of the First Folio. On her project she obtained guidance from long-time friend of the Folgers, Dr. Horace Howard Furness, who served as an advisor on the writing of her Master's Thesis. Dr. Furness, an attorney turned Shakespearean scholar was also a collector of Shakespeariana.<sup>565</sup> Furness, called, "one of the world's leading authorities on Shakespeare," is probably best known as editor of the New

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<sup>564</sup> In 1942 Joseph Quincy Adams does not include Emily Folger's contribution to building the Folger collection. He only acknowledges Mrs. Folger as "left the task of completing the building," once Henry Folger dies. See Joseph Quincy Adams, "The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Report on Progress, 1931-1941(Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1942); 1.

<sup>565</sup> Furness collection of Shakespeariana was donated to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1932.

Variorum of Shakespeare.<sup>566</sup> Emily Folger completed her Master's Degree in 1896. One year later Henry Folger purchased his first remarkable private collection of rare Shakespearean books, the Earl of Warwick's collection.<sup>567</sup> The Warwick collection, "the largest and most valuable lot he ever obtained at one stroke," became the cornerstone of the Folgers' collection.<sup>568</sup> The Folgers' collection of First Folios, totaling 79 copies is another cornerstone of their collection. Emily Folger's thesis on the subject of Shakespeare's First Folio certainly aided the Folgers' pursuit of collecting Shakespeariana. She understood the importance of collecting as many First Folios as possible in order to compare textual variations, and how it would set their collection apart from any other.

Emily Folger's pursuit of a master's degree is viewed by her male contemporaries as a great boon to her husband's efforts to collect Shakespeariana. Nowhere does it mention the possible fulfillment Mrs. Folger may have received from her studies. The topic is always framed as a means to assist her husband's quest of collecting Shakespeariana. The noted book collector A. S. W. Rosenbach writes of Emily's contribution to the Shakespeare collection, giving a prime example from the period of how her work was viewed:

In all these tremendous, and at times exciting, labors he was assisted by his wife, Emily C. Jordan Folger, whom he married in 1885. No one could write an account of Mr. Folger's career as a collector unless mention were made of her. Mrs. Folger had always been a student of

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<sup>566</sup> Harris Hull, "Philadelphia Opens New Library Today," *Washington Post* (23 April 1932); MS2.

<sup>567</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account*. ([Washington:] Published for the Trustees of Amherst, 1948); 2.

<sup>568</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account*. ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst, 1948); 3.

Shakespeare. During her college career at Vassar she had studied and admired the great poet and it is to her also that this great collection owes its existence. At the suggestion of Dr. Furness, Mrs. Folger made a special study of Shakespeare and his period, and this knowledge was always at the beck and call of her husband. She would hunt up bibliographical details and investigate difficult allusions, and frequently she would advise him to purchase a book or manuscript when he was wavering and undecided. It was a very rare and beautiful thing, this complete harmony with a husband's hobby, and I know of no more perfect example of it.<sup>569</sup>

While Rosenbach's intent is to praise the contribution Emily Folger made to building the Folger Collection, it is impossible to deny the almost belittling references and back-handed compliments included in Rosenbach's summation. From giving her an assistant's role in the whole endeavor to referring to her 'service' given Folger at her husband's 'beck and call' brings to view (albeit perhaps unintentionally) the demeaning overtones in Rosenbach's passage. While Rosenbach credits Emily Folger with the task of reviewing catalogues of rare Shakespearean books and identifying the most interesting volumes, she is consistently given a less important, even passive role in the development of their collection, as Henry Folger is given the role of decision maker on what items were ultimately purchased. In addition,

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<sup>569</sup> Rosenbach, Abraham Simon Wolf Rosenbach, *Henry C. Folger as a Collector* (New Haven: Privately Printed, 1931); 31.

Rosenbach's statement that Emily Folger received the impetus to study Shakespeare from another man denies her of any agency in the decision.

In contrast, many works referring to Henry Folger's contribution to the collection and Library project as supreme, often referring to him as the only Library founder. In the recent advertisement by the Library for the newly formed position of Director of Digital Access Henry Folger is mentioned as the only founder of the Library.<sup>570</sup> Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan's 2012 *Shakespeare in America* also distinguishes Henry Folger as the only founder of the Folger Shakespeare Library. In another recent example Michael Bristol's chapter "Henry Clay Folger, Jr." from volume nine of the series *Great Shakespeareans* published in 2011, Bristol makes reference to "Folger and his library."<sup>571</sup> Older publications also follow this trend. James G. McManaway's 1948 *Shakespeare Survey* article "The Folger Shakespeare Library" describes Emily Folger as "a well-educated...woman...whose lifelong joy it was to assist and encourage him [Folger] in his collecting."<sup>572</sup> McManaway, refers only to Henry Folger in the rest of his article as the founder of the Library. During the opening day ceremonies of the Library in 1932 Amherst President Stanley Pease publicly recognized Henry Folger as the creative impetus for the library project when he remarked, "[w]ithout the vision of Henry Clay Folger this enterprise would never have been undertaken; without the devoted, the unremitting, and the intelligent cooperation of Mrs. Folger it could never

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<sup>570</sup> "Director of Digital Access," Folger Shakespeare Library Website. Viewed 15 November 2012, available at: <http://www.folger.edu/Content/About-Us/Employment-and-Internships/>

<sup>571</sup> Michael Bristol, "Henry Clay Folger, Jr.," *Great Shakespeareans* 9 (New York: Continuum, 2011); 115.

<sup>572</sup> James G. McManaway, "The Folger Shakespeare Library," *Shakespeare Survey* No. 1 (1948); 57.

have been so successfully executed.”<sup>573</sup> Folger’s eulogy, presented by his minister Dr. Samuel Parkes Cadman, contains the expected ‘good words’ of his subject, while almost raising Folger’s deeds to mythic proportions. In Cadman’s words regarding the founding of the Library, “[i]t was a stream of power which he himself set in motion, a power of inspiration such as he himself received, a moving force for culture such as had thrilled through his own life from its awakening until its perfect fruition.”<sup>574</sup> In this example, Folger not only collected and founded the Library by himself, but received divine inspiration, albeit from Shakespeare and not God.

Conversely, a number of publications, like Rosenbach’s, frame Emily Folger as a bookkeeper, carefully cataloguing each book or item purchased for the collection.<sup>575</sup> Researching catalogues of rare books and keeping extensive records are indeed important steps in creating a large collection of Shakespearean books and other notables. The detailed cataloguing system Emily Folger developed was later used by the Folger Library in the first years after it opened. Joseph Quincy Adams called her efforts ‘invaluable’ for the Library to begin operations shortly after the Library was dedicated in 1932.<sup>576</sup> This was one of the few times that the men charged with opening the Library after Folger’s death in 1930 openly praised her contribution to the project. In addition *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Brief Account* published in 1948 for the trustees of Amherst College recognizes Emily

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<sup>573</sup> “Introductory Remarks by President Pease for Speakers at the Dedication of the Folger Shakespeare Library,” [n.d.] Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>574</sup> *Henry C. Folger, 18 June 1857-11 June 1930*, (New Haven: privately printed, 1931); 30.

<sup>575</sup> Constance D. Ellis, “Emily Clara Jordan Folger,” *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971); 637, Stephen Grant “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem: Creating Washington’s Folger Shakespeare Library,” *Washington History*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2012); 6.

<sup>576</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, “Folger Library Called Gem of Architecture,” *Washington Post* 23 April 1932; MS1.

Folger as sharing “fully her husband’s interest in Shakespeare, and what began as a hobby became with their increasing wealth an absorbing life work.”<sup>577</sup>

On two separate occasions Emily Folger stepped in to effectively save the Library after her husband’s untimely death by endowing it with a portion of her own fortune. In the spring of 1931, when it became clear that the endowment left by Henry Folger would not be enough to open and maintain the Library, Emily Folger expressed to Stanley King that the “Library must open, and that it must be kept open.” King recounts her statements on the subject, “[t]o make this possible she was prepared to sacrifice anything whatever. She would give the Trustees her own fortune and make the gift now.”<sup>578</sup> She completed this endowment while she was still alive, a very risky personal financial maneuver in the era after the 1929 stock market crash and ensuing Great Depression. The full tale of events exemplifies the intelligence and savvy of Emily Folger.<sup>579</sup>

Shortly after Henry Folger’s death in 1930 the Trustees of Amherst College noted Folger’s fortune after the 1929 crash was inadequate to open the Library. The endowment Folger had created of ten million dollars had been reduced to fewer than 1.5 million dollars. The construction of the building alone had cost just under that amount.<sup>580</sup> The yearly income generated from 1.5 million dollars was deemed

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<sup>577</sup> *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: a Brief Account*, (Amherst: Trustees of Amherst College, 1948); 2. This publication incorrectly identifies Emily Folger receiving her M.A degree from Vassar College before marrying Henry Folger. The couple was married in 1885 and she received her Master’s Degree in 1896.

<sup>578</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 11.

<sup>579</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 10-13.

<sup>580</sup> “Application for Permit to Build,” 18 November 1929, District of Columbia Department of Buildings, District of Columbia Government, D.C. Public Library Archives, 1898-present, Special Collections, Martin Luther King, Jr. Public Library, Washington.



insufficient to cover the Library's running costs.<sup>581</sup> Folger stated in his will the Amherst trustees must accept running the Library in return for payment of ¼ of the income off his endowment - between \$100,000 to \$250,000 a year. As Folger's endowment stood, Amherst would never receive more than the minimum. In addition to the request to fund another endowment for the Library, the trustees of Amherst asked Emily Folger to establish three endowed professorships at Amherst in order for the funding of two other professorships from another source.<sup>582</sup> Emily Folger countered the trustees' offer with an offer of notes against her husband's estate in the amount of \$480,000 to found 3 professorships (each for the amount of \$160,000 apiece) provided the College would agree to reduce the annual payment to Amherst from her husband's endowment.<sup>583</sup> Emily Folger was so determined to see the Library open and stay open that she was prepared to sacrifice anything to achieve this. She ultimately gave "securities with a market value of at least \$3 million" to the Folger endowment, allowing the Library to open as scheduled.<sup>584</sup> Emily Folger also agreed to pay the salary of Joseph Quincy Adams until her death provided Amherst would forgo its claim to \$50,000 annually of compensation from the annuities given by Emily Folger during her lifetime.<sup>585</sup>

After her death, Emily Folger's will listed what portion of her estate would go to the Library as well as her own previous financial contributions to her labor of love.

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<sup>581</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 10.

<sup>582</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 11.

<sup>583</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 10.

<sup>584</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), 12.

<sup>585</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 10.

The impressive list includes what her will provided upon her death: “a valuable collection of books, an assignment of \$1,294,500, the lot on which the memorial [Library] was placed on April 6, 1931”; and the items she gave to the Library after her husband’s death while she was still living: “\$3,000,000 in cash and securities on June 23, 1931, as well as furnishings and equipment for the Library, that cost \$227,062.55.”<sup>586</sup> As a means to recognize her contributions Emily Folger Amherst College awarded her an honorary Doctor of Letters degree in 1932, an honor her husband had received from his alma mater twenty years earlier. With Emily Folger’s considerable financial contribution the Library reading room opened to visiting scholars by January 1933.

By 1933, however, the Library’s financial future became uncertain once again. The Library’s operating budget could not balance without Amherst forgoing \$50,000 of its annual income for the year from serving as trustees of the Library and an infusion of \$30,000 from a bank loan. The bank loan was secured after Emily Folger approved the trustees’ amendment to allow the principal amount from her fund donated to the Library to be used as collateral for loans. In the ensuing year Amherst sought to broaden the scope of its management of the Library by obtaining the right to sell a portion of the oil securities from Henry and Emily Folger’s funds in order to better diversify the trust’s investments. In March 1934 a court order pursued by Amherst trustees enlarged the powers of the Amherst trustees, allowing sale of one-third of the common stock in Standard Oil’s companies held by the Library’s trust at a profit of nearly two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars. This money was then

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<sup>586</sup> “Folger Fund Gets Widow’s Fortune: Bulk of \$2,000,000 Estate Left to Shakespeare Memorial Founded by Oil Man,” *New York Times* 11 March 1936; 11.

reinvested in the market through the purchase of prime bonds. This diversification raised the yearly return of the Library's trust allowing the balance of the research institution's operating budget in 1934.<sup>587</sup>

Looking for other ways to save money in the Library's operating budget, King completed a management assessment of the staff at the Library in 1934. King, exercising new power as an efficiency evaluator and transition manager as provided by the recent court order enlarging Amherst trustees' management of the Library described his efforts in *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*.<sup>588</sup> After King's assessment, and with the reluctant approval of Emily Folger, it was concluded that William Slade should leave the Library and return to his duties at the Library of Congress. King then appointed Adams as Acting Director of the Library. Emily Folger approached Herbert Hoover to take over the Directorship once his term as President of the United States ended in 1933, but he declined. King, who expressed frustration at Emily Folger's pursuit of Hoover as a candidate for Director of the Library, could not convince Mrs. Folger that Adams was the best choice for the Directorship. Adams continued to serve as Acting Director until after Emily Folger's death in 1936, when the Trustees promoted him to Director, a position he held until his death in 1946.

Although the Amherst trustees acquired more control over the day to day operations of the Library, Emily Folger continued to correspond with Joseph Quincy Adams about the Library's operations and visited Washington so she could personally

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<sup>587</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 18-20.

<sup>588</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 20.

check on the development of the research institution. The working relationship between Mrs. Folger and Stanley King became tenuous, as can be surmised by King's expressed frustration about Mrs. Folger's pursuit of Herbert Hoover as Director of the Library along with her refusal to approve the candidate he preferred, Joseph Quincy Adams. King described Mrs. Folger as, "a woman of strong will and of extraordinary singleness of purpose; she was used to having her own way." When taken out of context King's description could be interpreted as a compliment paid Mrs. Folger. But when the statement is coupled with the stories King recounts regarding encounters with the co-founder when discussing matters of the Library, it becomes clear that King did not mean for his observation to be a compliment.<sup>589</sup> As King and the trustees focused on the financial stability of the Library and Joseph Quincy Adams focused on day to day duties at the Library, Emily Folger began a campaign to found a bold new public program there.

Mrs. Folger struggled for years until her death in 1936 to implement a functional use for the Theatre after its founding in 1932. After Henry Folger's death in 1930, Emily Folger was left to supervise the completion of the Library project. As such, one of her interests included promoting performances for the theatre space. Stanley King observed in his *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* that since Mrs. Folger usually financed these performances they (meaning the trustees of Amherst and the Library officials in Washington) saw no reason not to oblige the co-

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<sup>589</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1950); 8. Constance D. Ellis reports that Mrs. Folger was, "[g]entle, courteous, and feminine, she was nonetheless self-confident, used to her own way, and possessed of her own views, and she met the demands of this assignment with a degree of vigor and determination which occasionally confounded the trustees." See Constance D. Ellis, "Emily Clara Jordan Folger," *Notable American Women, 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, Vol. 2 (Cambridge, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971); 638.

founder.<sup>590</sup> After the 1933 lecture “The Education of Shakespeare, Illustrated with Textbooks in Use in His Day” by Amherst President George A. Plimpton, Emily Folger sought to schedule acting and musical performances in the theatre.

During Shakespeare’s birthday celebration at the Folger in 1934, Mrs. Folger secured a line-up of musical entertainments and a solo performance by a professional actress and educator. The Ypsilanti Singers gave a program of English choral music, John Challis played Elizabethan tunes on a recorder and harpsichord and Edith Wynne Matthison performed selections from *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*.<sup>591</sup> Matthison, whom Emily Folger became aware during the years she acted in New York on Broadway and in Ben Greet’s companies, had performed during the opening-day ceremony of the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1932, reciting a selection from Ralph Waldo Emerson.<sup>592</sup> The Folgers became aware of Matthison during her celebrated portrayal of Everyman in Ben Greet’s production that toured America at the beginning of the twentieth century. Matthison’s illustrious and varied professional stage and screen career spanned many years before she took up teaching.<sup>593</sup> From 1918 to 1940 she and her husband, playwright Charles Rann Kennedy, were co-heads of the Drama Department at the Bennett School of Liberal and Applied Arts (later Bennett Junior College) in Millbrook, New York.<sup>594</sup> Known for her excellent speaking skill she was honored in 1927 by the American Academy of Arts and Letters

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<sup>590</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>591</sup> Invitation, April 23, 1934, at 4:30pm and 8:45pm – Celebrating the Birth of William Shakespeare,” Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>592</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17. Also during the opening day ceremony the American Society of the Ancient Instruments played musical selections on instruments from the Folger Collection, the treble viol, viola de gamba, virginal and clavichord.

<sup>593</sup> “Edith Wynne Matthison Coming,” *Hartford Courant* 25 March 1917; A7.

<sup>594</sup> “Edith Wynne Matthison, Former Star, Dies at 83,” *Los Angeles Times* 25 September 1955; 3.

receiving the award for diction. In 1930 she was appointed lecturer in the Department of Speech at Mount Holyoke College.<sup>595</sup> She toured often in productions of her husband's plays or to give solo dramatic recitals like the one at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in 1934.

The following year Emily Folger scheduled Florence Locke to give a Shakespeare recital at the Library. Mrs. Folger had seen the American actress, known for performing solo theatrical presentations of Shakespeare's plays in the United States and abroad, "give the Trial scene of Queen Katharine beautifully."<sup>596</sup> Mrs. Folger described her performances as based on, "Ellen Terry's Programmes [sic] of personation. Edith Craig lent her all of Miss Terry's notebooks for study, and indorses [sic] her – as do all the English, and now the Americans."<sup>597</sup> *The Washington Post* announced Locke's choice of performing "Ellen Terry's lecture 'Shakespeare's Pathetic Women.' In this Dame Terry, with a running interpretative commentary, rendered scenes in which the poet represented Lady Macbeth, Ophelia, Desdemona, Juliet, Cordelia, Imogen, Viola, etc. Miss Locket [sic] will give this lecture in the manner of Ellen Terry, with all that artists's [sic] grace and gayety."<sup>598</sup> A month later the Theatre hosted a Shakespeare Recital by Samuel Arthur King. This performance was meant to introduce Emily Folger's idea for a new performance program that promised to significantly broaden the Library's mission.<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> "Miss Matthison Joins Staff," *Christian Science Monitor*, 30 April 1930; 10.

<sup>596</sup> Mrs. Folger, Glen Cove to J.Q. Adams, Washington, 9 February 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>597</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 9 Feb. 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>598</sup> "Shakespeare Recital," *Washington Post* 3 March 1935; B8.

<sup>599</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams notes that Florence Locke gave two acting recitals at the Library. See Joseph Quincy Adams, "Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library: A Report on Progress, 1931-1941," (Printed for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1943); 56.

Emily Folger had been campaigning to found a school of elocution since the Library's dedication but by 1934 had not made much headway in her goal.<sup>600</sup> Mrs. Folger was aware of the compromise made with District of Columbia officials in order for the Library to maintain the Elizabethan-style design of the Theatre. She was, however, not pleased with the obstacles she faced during her quest to establish an elocution school at the theatre. One of her letters to Joseph Quincy Adams in 1934 revealed her growing frustration claiming, "[o]f course what he [Henry Folger] wished for the theatre can't be read in his will because the Theatre developed in the constructing of the building [after her husband's death]; but know that he wished work done to improve the speech of Americans." Invoking her husband's name for support in her efforts revealed the great passion she held for her project. As discussed in Chapter One, both Emily and Henry Folger studied oration in college and Henry Folger nearly took a job teaching elocution after receiving his Bachelor's degree from Amherst. Mrs. Folger organized and financed the solo presentations by Edith Wynne Matthison and Florence Locke. This suggests how strongly she desired the implementation of a performance program at the Theatre. Mrs. Folger left no mission statement for the elocution school so it is difficult to know exactly what type of program she intended to found. But it appears she did not consult with Amherst trustees or other Library officials about the nature of her project.

A person who she is likely to have consulted about her ideas for the elocution school is her older sister Mary. Mary Augusta Jordan (1855 – 1941), highly lauded professor emeritus at Smith College, was the first person to contribute funds for a

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<sup>600</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

research fellowship at the Library in 1932.<sup>601</sup> Soon after her first donation, she offered funds to the Library to help establish Emily Folger's elocution school. Jordan served an esteemed career as a professor of English at Smith College for thirty-seven years. Her 1903 book *Correct Writing and Speaking* is part historiographical survey of views on the proper methods of speaking and writing English and part instruction manual for those interested in improving their personal speaking and writing styles. Part of the "The Woman's Home Library" series edited by Margaret E. Santster, Jordan's title was marketed to women who held an interest in continuing their education but could not attend a traditional brick and mortar institution of higher learning. Susan Kates discussed Jordan's career and book in her 1997 article "Subversive Feminism: The Politics of Correctness in Mary Augusta Jordan's *Correct Writing and Speaking*." Jordan had been an active participant in the movement to expand educational opportunities to women, "[s]he gave speeches to raise money for university scholarships for women, and she encouraged women outside the formal academy to pursue education in whatever ways they could."<sup>602</sup> Jordan advocated in the education of women the inclusion of the recognition that they approached learning differently from men.

The logic of feeling is quite as important as the manipulation of the syllogisms, and likely to be a good deal more practical. But there is

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<sup>601</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, "Folger Library, Memorial to Shakespeare, Dedicated," *The Washington Post* 23 April 1932; 1. "It was announced by Dr. Pease that the first Shakespeare scholarship for advanced study at the Folger Library has been established by Mrs. Folger's sister, Miss Mary A. Jordan, a former teacher of English at Smith College." According to Joseph Quincy Adams the Folger Shakespeare Library established research fellowships in 1935. See Joseph Quincy Adams, in his *The Folger Shakespeare Library: A Report on Progress, 1931-1941* (Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1942); 52.

<sup>602</sup> Susan Kates, "Subversive Feminism: The Politics of Correctness in Mary Augusta Jordan's *Correct Writing and Speaking* (1904)." *College Composition and Communication*. 48, no. 4 (December 1997), 506.



an almost hopeless prejudice against a woman's feelings' they are looked upon as the barrier between her and real success; they are popularly believed to be without rhyme or reason; it is thought to be dangerous to meddle with them, and peculiarly undesirable that a woman should investigate them herself.<sup>603</sup>

In addition to recognizing and validating the presence of feelings in female students, Jordan also rejected the traditional method of teaching where the student is viewed as an receptacle waiting to be filled with knowledge deposited by an instructor, "[t]he student's mind is a republic of powers, not a receiving vault."<sup>604</sup> Furthermore, Jordan sought to free women from the restraints imposed by men in how they were to express themselves, "these women yearned for a course of study of the sort that Jordan advocated, one that broke 'loose from the traditions of men,' where the scope of rigid correctness made for a suffocating study of language and expression."<sup>605</sup>

Considering Mary Jordan's background, it is not surprising that she pledged the first seed money for her sister's project that, broadly defined, was intended to help the speech of Americans. While Mary Jordan's book advised women on the topic of correct writing and speaking, she did not, however, teach elocution. The person Emily

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<sup>603</sup> Susan Kates, "Subversive Feminism: The Politics of Correctness in Mary Augusta Jordan's *Correct Writing and Speaking* (1904)," *College Composition and Communication* 48, no. 4 (December 1997): 506-507.

<sup>604</sup> Susan Kates, "Subversive Feminism: The Politics of Correctness in Mary Augusta Jordan's *Correct Writing and Speaking* (1904)," *College Composition and Communication* 48, no. 4 (December 1997): 508.

<sup>605</sup> Susan Kates, "Subversive Feminism: The Politics of Correctness in Mary Augusta Jordan's *Correct Writing and Speaking* (1904)," *College Composition and Communication* 48, no. 4 (December 1997): 515.

Folger chose to lead the school of elocution unfortunately became a major stumbling block to her plans.

Emily Folger's choice for Director of Speech, Samuel Arthur King, was met with skepticism by Amherst Trustee Stanley King. King wrote in his 1950 *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* that William Slade and Joseph Quincy Adams did not think such a post should be created at the Library.<sup>606</sup> Not only did Stanley King disapprove of her choice of candidate, he saw no validity in starting such a public program at the theatre.<sup>607</sup> Emily Folger had written to Slade about Samuel Arthur King as early as December 1931. Slade courteously responded to Emily Folger that he was "interested in what you write about Mr. S. A. King. When he is in Washington perhaps he will come to the Folger Shakespeare Library, when I can meet him too."<sup>608</sup> Yet, Stanley King confessed that Slade, along with Adams, were not enthusiastic about Emily Folger's proposal.<sup>609</sup> In addition, King was highly disturbed that Emily Folger expected to appoint a Director of Speech with an "equal salary, authority, and title," as Slade and Adams.<sup>610</sup> As Emily Folger had agreed to pay Adam's salary until her death, King's thoughts undoubtedly turned to the advancing years of the seventy-seven-year-old co-founder and the task of funding three directors' salaries after her passing. Perhaps in an attempt to set up a road-block to the elocution school, King expressed to Mrs. Folger that there was not appropriate

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<sup>606</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>607</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>608</sup> William Adams Slade, Washington to Emily Folger, Glen Cove, 4 December 1931, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>609</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>610</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 10.

office space for another high level post at the Library. Emily Folger provided a quick reply, offering the use of the Founder's Room for the Director of Speech, a room included in the building originally designated for the Folgers' use when they were expected to visit Washington, D.C.<sup>611</sup> This symbolic association between the co-founder and proposed Director of Speech must have created additional concern in King, for it suggested a close alliance between Emily Folger and her appointee. Furthermore, Stanley King's efforts to streamline the research institution's expenditures would have been negated by the creation of another high level appointee at the Library, not to mention the undetermined cost a school of elocution would tax the already fragile operating budget of the Library. Finally, the major accomplishment Adams and King are credited with during their service to the Library, namely growing the collection beyond the Folgers' narrow scope of Shakespeariana to include "the finest collection of early Continental and British printed works outside England" might have never come to fruition if the Library split its mission during its early existence to include the development of public programs.

Early in 1934, Emily Folger wrote to Director Adams, "[a]s to the theater it seems to me, that I can't die till the Trustees have fixed some provision for carrying out Mr. Folger's purpose for that department of the Library...Mr. S. A. King understands best. My sister has started a fund for support. I have told Mr. Justice Stone, Dr. Plimpton, Dr. King."<sup>612</sup> This letter is, in essence, Emily Folger's rallying cry for pushing her proposition to the forefront of consideration to the Amherst

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<sup>611</sup> In a touching display of devotion (and forward thinking), Henry Folger made explicit in his will that his wife was to retain the right to use the collection for research making sure she was never denied access to the collection that she had worked so hard to secure.

<sup>612</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Q. Adams, Washington 5 February 1934, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

trustees and Library officials. By October 1934, the President of Amherst had offered Samuel Arthur King the opportunity to deliver two lectures, one in Amherst for an invited audience and one at the Folger Shakespeare Library.<sup>613</sup> At these events, King would give a demonstration of his talents and interests in elocution and Shakespeare.

Early in January 1935 Emily Folger expressed to Joseph Quincy Adams her anticipation for King's lecture at Amherst. In the same letter, she told Adams of her strong desire for King's lecture at the Library to occur in April in honor of the Bard's birthday celebration. Here, she again made it known that, "I am wishing that we may enjoy a programme planned by Mr. King to illustrate the principles which he is to illuminate for us carrying out Mr. Folger's intention of making the Theater a standard of English speech."<sup>614</sup> Emily Folger also mentioned to Adams that to date her sister had given the Trustees \$3,000 in Henry Folger's name as seed money for the elocution school.

The first lecture took place in Amherst late in January 1935. Amherst President Stanley Pease had invited Samuel Arthur King to present his talents in front of senior members of various departments; Performing Arts, Public Speaking and English to name a few.<sup>615</sup> After the presentation, Emily Folger vetted the audience's reaction. She asked Joseph Quincy Adams who "worked for the lectures" correcting "the noise and draughts, and secured footlights,"<sup>616</sup> if he felt the way that she did, that "Mr. King

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<sup>613</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington 23 October 1934, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>614</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington 4 January 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>615</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>616</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington 9 February 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

was highly worthy of the theatre.”<sup>617</sup> She also reported to Adams less than two weeks later that, “Justice Stone found Mr. King’s lecture very interesting and very entertaining, as specifically what he said of the rhythm in Shakespeare’s blank verse.”<sup>618</sup> Mrs. Folger’s reference of Harlan Fiske Stone suggests her recognition of the importance of acquiring Stone’s positive reaction to King’s performance. Stone graduated from Amherst in 1894 and was appointed an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 1933. From 1933 until his death in 1946 Stone served as chairman of the Folger Trustee Committee, a position left vacant by the death of Calvin Coolidge. King, Adams and Stone proved to be leaders that significantly influenced the development of the Library after it opened. Calvin Coolidge’s service to the Library, as described by King, consisted of expressing “no opinions other than to agree with Mrs. Folger on any suggestions she put forward.”<sup>619</sup> Justice Stone, however, developed a great passion for the Library’s development, visiting the Library often to discuss operating matters with Adams. King distinguished the leadership provided by this triumvirate, noting that “[t]rue, the Folger Committee had few formal meetings while Stone was chairman. Most problems were settled by informal conference or correspondence by the Director [Adams], Stone, and myself. And the Amherst Board was satisfied to follow a recommendation in which the

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<sup>617</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 28 January 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>618</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 9 February 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>619</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 18.

Director of the Library, the Chairman of the Committee, and the President of the College were in agreement.<sup>620</sup>

It would seem that from her efforts, Emily Folger's desire to found the school of elocution at the Library was firmly in the works. She had secured favorable feedback from Samuel Arthur King's performance at Amherst, she had begun to raise funds to help finance the endeavor, and the Trustees had agreed to her specific request that King present the sole performance for Shakespeare's birthday celebration. The printed invitations to the event read: "You are cordially invited to attend a "Dramatic Recital of *Hamlet*," by Samuel Arthur King, M.A. (University of London), Lecturer of Bryn Mawr College, to be given in the Auditorium of the Folger Shakespeare Library."<sup>621</sup>

Stanley King, however, was not going to allow such a development to occur. According to King, Emily Folger's esteem for Samuel Arthur King's ability was unfounded. He wrote in 1950 that after King's first lecture at Amherst the lecture attendees "were unanimous in reporting unfavorably," on Samuel Arthur King's talent and expertise.<sup>622</sup> According to King, he and the others found S. A. King's performance to belong to an 'older' school of elocution. King even referred to S. A. King's performance as an example of 'Ham' acting and the audience had a difficult time "taking him seriously."<sup>623</sup> Ultimately, at a private meeting he held with the lecturer in Farmington, Connecticut, he convinced Emily Folger's candidate to

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<sup>620</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 18.

<sup>621</sup> Invitation, n.d., Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>622</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

<sup>623</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17.

withdraw from consideration for the Director of Speech position.<sup>624</sup> Stanley King, who admitted feeling sorry for the lecturer during their private meeting, commented that he noticed King's "effective years were already passed and that he must soon be pensioned." King concluded his discussion of the entire topic in *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library* sharing, "[t]he interview passed off pleasantly enough. He [S. A. King] must have communicated with Mrs. Folger after our talk, for she discontinued her pressure for the appointment. Unhappily, neither she nor he had much longer to live, but that I did not know."<sup>625</sup> With King, Adams and Stone unconvinced of the worthiness of the elocution school, and the ensuing death of the co-founder the idea was quietly forgotten.

Emily Folger passed away 21 February 1936, less than a year after King's performance of *Hamlet* at the Folger Shakespeare Library. In the months leading up to her death, there is a noticeable difference in the language in her correspondences to Library officials, as if the 'fight' had been taken out of her. In these letters her handwriting, already a challenge to read, becomes almost undecipherable. In November 1935 she complained to Adams that she is not allowed to travel to Hot Springs, VA anymore, a favorite vacationing spot for her and Henry Folger while he was alive.<sup>626</sup> In her last letter to Adams in January 1936 she discussed the state of her financial affairs and support of the Library commenting she, "cannot write clearly

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<sup>624</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 17-18.

<sup>625</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 18.

<sup>626</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 16 November 1935, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

because I am not clear.”<sup>627</sup> Although unsuccessful in founding a school of elocution at the Library, her success in founding an educational program came during the last year of her life when she started support for the “Folger Fund” at her alma mater, Vassar College. The fund paid for scholars to travel to the school to present lectures on Shakespeare.<sup>628</sup>

Why did Emily Folger desire to nominate Samuel Arthur King as the potential Director of a school of elocution at the Folger Shakespeare Library? She was familiar with his work from attending one of his public lectures, a “Shakespeare Recital,” of *Hamlet* at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn in January 1905.<sup>629</sup> King gave at least two other free Shakespearean recital-lectures in New York. These occurred at the People’s Institute in 1906.<sup>630</sup> The Institute, founded by Professor Charles Sprague Smith of Columbia University in 1896, was designed to bring additional educational opportunities to the working poor and immigrant workers in New York City.<sup>631</sup> A project in scope akin to Jane Adam’s Hull House in Chicago and Lowell Institute in Boston, the People’s Institute worked in conjunction with the Cooper Union mechanics school to bring free educational lectures and classes in subjects other than vocational skills or mechanics.

King’s professional pedigree included a Master’s Degree from the University of London (1900) and serving early in his career as a Special Lecturer of Elocution and

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<sup>627</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 24 January 1936, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>628</sup> See <http://vcencyclopedia.vassar.edu/alumni/emily-jordan-folger.html> Viewed 5 April 2012.

<sup>629</sup> *Student’s Bulletin*, Pratt Institute, Vol. IV, No. 10 (2 December 1904).

<sup>630</sup> “This Week’s Free Lectures,” *New York Times*, 8 April 1906; and 15 April 1906; 7.

<sup>631</sup> Tim Lacy, “Fostering Unity Amidst Diversity: The People’s Institute and Great Books Idea, 1897-1930,” Paper Delivered at 2008 Conference of The Historical Society, Baltimore; 2-3. Available at: <http://www.bu.edu/historic/conference08/Lacy.pdf> Viewed: 25 April 2012. Cited with permission from the author.



Diction at a number of well-respected colleges; Johns Hopkins University, Wellesley College and University of California.<sup>632</sup> M. Carey Thomas appointed King Non-Resident Lecturer in English Diction in 1902 at Bryn Mawr College where he spent most of his career, teaching for approximately three decades.<sup>633</sup> Late in his career at Bryn Mawr, King worked with Katherine Hepburn where he greatly improved the performance and diction of the future four-time Oscar winner.<sup>634</sup> Years after graduating from Bryn Mawr, Hepburn would call him, “an enormous help to me.”<sup>635</sup> S. A. King also published a book on speech in 1905, *Graduated Exercises in Articulation*, a publication successful enough to be reprinted in 1907 and 1931.<sup>636</sup>

Examining S. A. King’s *Graduated Exercises of Articulation* provides insight into why Emily Folger proposed S. A. King as Director of Speech at the Library.

Comments from S. A. King’s book identify King as an early proponent of World English. As described by Dudley Knight in his article “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate,” World English, “was a creation of speech teachers, and boldly labeled as a class-based accent: the speech of persons variously described as “educated,” “cultivated,” or “cultured”; the speech of persons who moved in rarified social or intellectual circles and of those who might aspire to do so.”<sup>637</sup> Knight observes that from roughly 1920 to 1945 speech teachers and linguists argued over

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<sup>632</sup> David Scull, “Annual Report, Bryn Mawr College, 1906-7,” Philadelphia: John C. Winston Co., 1908.

<sup>633</sup> “Bryn Mawr to Teach Better English,” *Boston Evening Transcript* 1 November 1902; 8.

<sup>634</sup> Ann Nelson, “Katherine Hepburn’s False Start in Baltimore,” *The Baltimore Sun* 1 April 1931; TM1.

<sup>635</sup> Katherine Hepburn, “Excerpts from her talk to Bryn Mawr seniors in 1973 and her convocation address at the College’s Centennial Commencement in 1985,” viewed 20 January 2009. Available at <http://www.brynmawr.edu/alumnae/bulletin/wi03/hepburn.htm>

<sup>636</sup> Samuel Arthur King, *Graduated Exercises in Articulation*, (Boston: George H. Ellis Company, 1905).

<sup>637</sup> Dudley Knight, “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 160.

whether the United States should promote a codified American speech standard.<sup>638</sup>

The aim for promoting such a standard was, “preserving the standards of articulations” of a type of American speech deemed more beautiful or proper. As argued by those against such a speech standard, these articulations, (many containing elements of England’s Received Pronunciation), made the trained speaker sound *unlike* the vast majority of individuals residing in the United States. Although King’s book does not overtly support the movement, there are references in his work that suggest he possessed a similar mindset. For example, in his introduction, King bemoans the sloppy speech of so many young people in America and observes,

[i]n society no excuse is made for slovenly manners or dress, yet considerable latitude has unfortunately been granted to slovenly articulation. The natural effect of this attitude on the part of the well-bred world upon youth is only too clear. The advantages of a graceful, clean-cut articulation seldom enter into the calculations of the average student. Young ladies spend hours of careful consideration upon the shades of their gowns and the shapes of their hats, and young men are fastidious to a degree about the shades of their neckties; but with regard to the shades of their vowel sounds and correct shapes of their consonants – *the distinctive hall-marks of good breeding* – they have little or no care. Evidently they lose sight of the fact that it is just as essential to please the ear as the eye. Students are perfectly willing to spend years abroad in order to acquire a purity of sound in foreign

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<sup>638</sup> Dudley Knight, “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 162.

languages; but in a case of their own beautiful mother tongue they are  
*content with speaking in a manner that can only be characterized as a  
disgrace to an educated man or woman.*<sup>639</sup>

Knight points out that promoters of World English believed any foreign accents or regional dialects found within the United States were inferior and less beautiful treatments of the English language.<sup>640</sup> In *Graduated Exercises of Articulation* King takes to task the usage of “R-coloring” in two separate regionalisms found in the United States. His language, surprisingly harsh in tone, demonstrates great disdain when he declares,

[a] barbarous exaggeration in the form of a harsh grating sound,  
“resembling a morose grinding of the back teeth,” sometimes made by  
speakers in certain sections that shall be nameless, cannot be indorsed  
on the grounds of expediency nor of beauty. This unmusical  
sound...may be characterized as an importation that has not been  
sufficiently examined at the custom-house; the sooner turned out, the  
better for the euphony of the language.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Samuel Arthur King, *Graduated Exercises in Articulation* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1907); vii - ix. My emphasis.

<sup>640</sup> Dudley Knight, “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 169.

<sup>641</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 14-15.

World English followed the pronunciation of certain vowel sounds found in Received Pronunciation that most American's would clearly identify as 'English' or 'non-American.'<sup>642</sup> King acknowledges this difference but insists that if, "our clusters of consonants, when not neglected and deprived of their due vocality, [sic] give strength and dignity that well compensate for the lack of open vowel sounds in the language."<sup>643</sup> Here King recognizes one of the parameters of World English, but specifically, and interestingly, chooses an alternate accommodation that he believes will achieve "beautiful" or "cultured speech."

Knight's insightful article continues by tracing the development of the World English movement from English classrooms in U.S. public primary and secondary schools to the instruction of theatre courses in colleges during the twentieth century. In Knight's opinion, the leap from high school classroom to college campus was not a difficult one to make. As Knight observes, professional American actors routinely utilized an English accent (England's Received Pronunciation) when working in classical plays at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>644</sup> It made sense that during the early part of the twentieth century the promotion of a codified speech standard for actors in classical plays that closely resembled England's Received Pronunciation occurred. While Bryn Mawr did not operate a Theatre Department during King's tenure, King was very involved in dramatic activity at the college, directing plays and

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<sup>642</sup> For a full description of the differences between World English and Received Pronunciation see Dudley Knight, "Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 161-2.

<sup>643</sup> Samuel Arthur King, *Graduated Exercises in Articulation* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1907); 83.

<sup>644</sup> Dudley Knight, "Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 171.

celebratory festivals at the college.<sup>645</sup> King, like other speech teachers Knight writes about in “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate,” applied their teachings of speaking “beautiful” and “proper” English to the stage and later transferred their teaching to acting programs. Such speech teachers included Margaret Prendergast McLean who was the Head of the Department of English Diction at the Leland Powers School in Boston and taught at Richard Boleslavsky’s American Laboratory Theatre in New York City. Alice Hermes taught at HB Studio in New York City and Edith Skinner served as the Speech Instructor at Carnegie Technical Institute and later for the Drama Division of the Julliard School in New York. Both McLean and Skinner published books on their methods, *Good American Speech* (1928) and *Speak with Distinction* (1942) respectively.<sup>646</sup> King’s *Graduated Exercises in Articulation* appeared at the beginning of the movement in 1905 with a reprint of the publication issued in 1907 and 1931, during the height of the World English debate (or Good American Speech as it was later labeled by McLean and Skinner). An article from the *Baltimore Sun* in 1914 claims that King’s post of Non-Resident Lecturer of English Diction at Bryn Mawr is the only one of its kind at a college in the United States, something else that may push Samuel Arthur King to the very beginnings of this movement.<sup>647</sup>

Localizing S. A. King’s place within the World English movement, suggests how King’s talents and training may have assisted in Emily Folger’s quest to make the Folger Elizabethan Theatre “a standard of English speech.” Was the co-founder

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<sup>645</sup> “May Day at Bryn Mawr: Old English Plays and Pageants Given for Building Fund,” *Baltimore Sun* 3 May 1906; 11.

<sup>646</sup> Dudley Knight, “Standard Speech: The Ongoing Debate, *The Vocal Vision*, edited by Marian Hampton and Barbara Acker, (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1997); 174-75.

<sup>647</sup> “Tells Girls of Voice,” *Baltimore Sun* 4 April 1914; 4.

interested in applying King's methods to the training of American actors? S. A. King's background would have prepared him for this type of teaching. If we consider her statement in 1935 to Joseph Quincy Adams that Henry Folger desired the "theatre to be a standard of English speech," this could suggest using the theatre to foster the speaking skills of young American actors, particularly those aspiring to work in Shakespearean productions. Emily Folger's personal papers include an 1880 *New York Times* article "The Pulpit and the Stage," a reprint from the literary magazine *Appletons' Journal*. The article suggests observing actors' performance methods as a way to improve a preacher's or even anyone's "elocution and gesture."<sup>648</sup> The presence of the article in Emily Folger's personal papers suggests that from an early age Mrs. Folger held an interest in the connection between the study of elocution and the theatre. As discussed in Chapter One and Two Emily Folger recorded comments in her diary "Plays I Have Seen," essentially noting her and Henry Folger's comments about theatrical productions they attended. Comments range from the size of the audience to the acting ability of the performers to the shape of a particular prop. Particularly relevant to the current discussion are the comments made about actors' elocution and their ability to speak Shakespearean verse well. While attending a production of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1907 at the Garden Theatre in New York with Ben Greet as Shylock Emily Folger appreciates that, "[t]he text so completely spoken it is a great joy. Every point comes out."<sup>649</sup> At a production of *Macbeth* starring E. H. Sothorn and Julia Marlowe in 1910 Mrs. Folger reported that Henry Folger, "is distressed that the elocution of all makes the audience lose some of the

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<sup>648</sup> "The Pulpit and the Stage," *New York Times*, 18 January 1880.

<sup>649</sup> Emily Folger, "Plays I Have Seen;" 74. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

drama. Not one word should be lost, of course.”<sup>650</sup> During the New Theatre’s first season the Folger’s were invited to the opening night performance of *Twelfth Night* with English actress Annie Russell. The Folgers were unimpressed with the production noting that, “Russell was tame and sentimental. She looked so old and homely. We thought that the play would not have a run.” The Folgers, who took their seats in the balcony of the theatre observed, according to Mrs. Folger’s diary that although there was “much new business” in the production, the “rhythm” of the Shakespearean verse “was not observed.”<sup>651</sup> The couple’s cultivated interest in theatrical productions facilitated their ability to be discerning audience members, audience members who were more than capable of appreciating the nuance of a well-turned phrase or an example of exceptional vocal expression.

Twenty years later and approximately three months before the death of Henry Folger in 1930, interest in the effectiveness of actor training in the United States, particularly training actors for Shakespearean productions, can be witnessed by an article from the *New York Times* by theatre critic J. Brooks Atkinson. This article was reprinted in the *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, a publication that Mrs. Folger would have received with her membership to the Shakespeare Association of America. In “The Shakespearean Civic Theatre in Chicago” Atkinson identified a need for elocution-type training for young American actors in his review of the newly founded repertory company in Chicago lamenting:

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<sup>650</sup> Emily Folger, “Plays I Have Seen,” 55. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>651</sup> Emily Folger, “Plays I Have Seen,” 24. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

If, by the organization and trade methods of the current theatre and the incompetence of acting, we are losing our hold on these leaves of immortality, we are losing what is most essential to the drama and condemning our finest impulses to death and sterility. Without Shakespeare in intelligent performances the theatre is not worth preserving... What you miss at present are the refinements of that art – the frenzy and rapture of great poetry, the ‘underhum of song,’ the turbulent melancholy of Shakespeare’s pensive passion<sup>652</sup>

In short, Atkinson found missing fully developed vocal prowess by the less experienced actors to speak the demanding poetry of Shakespeare. While he praised the older, more experienced actors in the company, he lambasted the younger company members, “...the apprentices speak their lines with that frightened breathlessness at which lovers of Shakespeare muffle their ears in terror; and when the casting problems of such a play as ‘Julius Caesar’ promotes the apprentices to important roles, the effect is rather distracting.”<sup>653</sup> A school founded to aid the education of young actors in the rhetorical art of speaking Shakespeare would have been an interesting development at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Such a program could have complemented the work conducted in the Old Reading Room of the Library; the study of Shakespeare as a literary or historical subject. While it seems Emily Folger found such an idea promising, Stanley King, Justice Stone and Joseph

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<sup>652</sup> J. Brooks Atkinson, (*New York Times*), “The Shakespearean Civic Theatre of Chicago,” *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 5 no. 2 (April 1930); 73.

<sup>653</sup> J. Brooks Atkinson, (*New York Times*), “The Shakespearean Civic Theatre of Chicago,” *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 5 no. 2 (April 1930); 74.



Quincy Adams did not agree with the co-founder. Ultimately, Emily Folger's idea for founding a school of elocution did not 'fit' within the intellectual activity envisioned for the Library by Amherst trustees and other Library officials.

### Section 3: Filming Shakespeare at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre

While Emily Folger attempted to interest the Amherst Trustees in founding a school of elocution at the Library, another organization approached the Library with a scheme to produce and film theatrical productions in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Early in 1934 Thomas Wood Stevens and Marc T. Nielsen founded Globe Theatre Productions, Ltd. A producing company, its scope included building a practical reconstruction of the Globe playhouse at the Merrie England exhibit and producing short versions of the Bard's plays during the second summer of the Chicago World's Fair *Century of Progress* Exhibition. Nielsen, an interior decorator, designer and art gallery owner convinced Stevens over dinner early in 1934 that the scheme would become a popular attraction at the Fair.<sup>654</sup> Before the evening's end Stevens had sketched on the fly leaf of his book *The Theatre from Athens to Broadway* a rough plan for a reconstructed Globe Theatre.<sup>655</sup> Stevens, an accomplished visual artist, writer, educator and director of theatre and historical pageants had spent ten years as Chair of the first degree-granting theatre performance program in the United States in the Department of Drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh (later Carnegie-Mellon University) and five years as Director of the Goodman Theatre in

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<sup>654</sup> Donna Rose Feldman, "An Historical Study of Thomas Wood Stevens' Globe Theatre Company 1934-1937" (Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953); 9.

<sup>655</sup> Stevens' book contains the illustration "The Globe Theatre: Conjectural Interior," See Thomas Wood Stevens, *The Theatre: From Athens to Broadway*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1932); 83.

Chicago.<sup>656</sup> Stevens' background included experience with original practices productions of Shakespeare through his association with another theatre director and sometime actor Ben Iden Payne.

Payne, English by birth, first worked as an actor before turning to work as a stage manager and director. Notable appointments in his career in England and the United States include director of the Manchester Repertory Company, the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival, and directing numerous productions on Broadway as well as in the regions of the United States.<sup>657</sup> Payne, influenced by William Poel's work developed with the Elizabethan Stage Society crafted his own approach to producing Shakespeare over the course of his career, an approach he termed "Modified Elizabethan Production." This development Payne noted in his memoir, *A Life in the Wooden O*, as, "the accomplishment that gives me the greatest satisfaction."<sup>658</sup> Stevens and Payne shared most of the responsibility of cutting the texts and directing the productions by the Old Globe Players at the Century of Progress Exhibition. A third member of the artistic team, Theodore Viehman, a former student of Payne's from Carnegie Tech, cut and directed one production and also prepared the dancers who entertained outside the theatre on the Village Green.<sup>659</sup>

The Globe Theatre Productions opened its run at the Fair with four plays before expanding to fifteen truncated productions before the close of their season on

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<sup>656</sup> Felicia Hardison Londre and Daniel J. Watermeir, *The History of North American Theater: The United States, Canada, and Mexico: From Pre-Columbian Times to the Present*, (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1998); 437.

<sup>657</sup> See Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in the Wooden O*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

<sup>658</sup> Ben Iden Payne, *A Life in the Wooden O*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); 190.

<sup>659</sup> Theodore Viehman, student of Stevens at Carnegie and who had studied country dancing with Cecil Sharp (best proponents of English dance) was hired to assist in preparing the entertainers for the Village Green. Viehman had assisted Stevens with a number of pageants and was allowed to cut and direct one Shakespeare play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

October 1, 1934. The Chicago Daily Tribune reported on June 4, 1934 that the six to seven performances a day were filled by “laughing and applauding crowds” filling the 400 seat theatre to capacity.<sup>660</sup> The abbreviated Shakespearean plays stayed a popular attraction at the Fair during their five-month run; the Globe Theatre Players performed for 400,000 people in five months establishing an impressive 80% attendance rate at the theatre.<sup>661</sup> Nielsen and Stevens envisioned the Globe Theatre Players’ work to continue after the close of the Fair. The company completed a short run in a movie theatre in Chicago soon after the Fair closed, before embarking on a tour of the mid-west. The successful run at the Chicago World’s Fair prompted officials planning the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition in San Diego’s Balboa Park to invite Stevens and Nielsen to build another Globe playhouse reconstruction for similar reduced-length Shakespearean productions seen in Chicago. The company became such a popular attraction at the first year of the San Diego Exposition that expositions in Dallas (Greater Texas and Pan-American Exhibition) and Cleveland (Great Lake’s Exposition) invited Stevens to build his Globe reproduction in their cities and provide an acting company offering the shortened versions of plays by Shakespeare as seen in Chicago and San Diego.<sup>662</sup>

While Nielsen and Stevens’ Globe Theatre Productions, Inc. had ‘found legs’ scheduling a near consecutive three year run, had built four reconstructions of the Globe playhouse and put together three separate acting companies (the Old Globe

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<sup>660</sup> Charles Collins, “Shakespeare Attracts Full Houses at Fair; 15 Plays to be Presented During Season,” *Chicago Tribune*, 4 June 1934; 17.

<sup>661</sup> Donna Rose Feldman, “An Historical Study of Thomas Wood Stevens’ Globe Theatre Company 1934-1937” (Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953); 74, 78.

<sup>662</sup> Darlene Gould Davies, “The Globe Players in Balboa Park,” *The Journal of San Diego History* 56 No. 3 (Summer 2010); 128.

Players, the Fortune Players and the Blackfriar Players), not all of the company's endeavors were successful. After the Chicago run there was civic interest in building a permanent Globe reconstruction, although this scheme never materialized.<sup>663</sup> After appearances at four separate exhibitions it would seem reasonable that Nielsen and Steven's company would be invited to perform at the 1939 New York World's Fair Merrie England attraction. While the Globe playhouse reconstruction for the 1939 Fair was based on Steven's design, Margaret Webster (1905-1972), a successful Broadway director of Shakespeare and an actress, was hired to cast and direct the plays.<sup>664</sup>

A plan of Nielsen and Stevens' that did not materialize involved filming full-length versions of Shakespeare's plays starring the acting company hired by Globe Theatre Productions, Inc. The completed films would then be sold or rented to high schools and colleges, providing insight to students' and teachers' understanding of original practices productions of Shakespeare. Stevens felt no better place existed in which to film the productions than the Elizabethan Theatre at the Folger Shakespeare Library. The contract Globe Theatre Productions signed with Chicago Fair officials stipulated that Nielsen and Stevens controlled filming rights for any Globe Players'

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<sup>663</sup> Katherine Kelley, "Hope to Make Globe Theater Company a Chicago Institution," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 16 Jan 1935; 15.

<sup>664</sup> Millie S. Barranger, *Margaret Webster: A Life in the Theater*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); 100-102. Webster used Steven's abridged version of *A Comedy of Errors*. Webster did not enjoy her experience at the New York World's Fair, ultimately finding original practices of Shakespeare's plays undesirable, particularly playing in a reconstructed stage from Shakespeare time. She referred to individuals interested in producing Shakespeare in this manner with the derogatory term Globalators. Webster presented her arguments against limiting the playing of Shakespeare on a reconstructed Globe in her review of "On Producing Shakespeare, by Ronald Watkins," *Shakespeare Quarterly* Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan., 1952); 63-68, and in her own book *Shakespeare without Tears*, (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1942); 63-69.

productions.<sup>665</sup> Along with filming the productions at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, the Folger Library would retain the rights to the films to then sell or rent them to colleges and high schools. Thomas Wood Stevens felt strongly that this scheme had the potential to make a great deal of money for the Library.<sup>666</sup> The Globe Theatre Productions film scheme also had promised financial backing for the cost of filming the productions from a national philanthropic organization, the Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>667</sup>

In March 1934, Stevens was contacted by David Harrison Stevens (1884-1980), Director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1932 to 1949. The Foundation possessed interest in providing funding for filming Stevens' Shakespearean productions for educational purposes.<sup>668</sup> David Stevens, a professor of English Literature at the University of Chicago from 1912-1930, was keenly interested in developing visual educational opportunities in the arts.<sup>669</sup> His interest reflected the Rockefeller Foundation's shift in the 1930s from funding "traditional, discipline-based research" in favor of "focusing on radio, film and theater (especially regional drama) in order to heighten popular appreciation of the humanities."<sup>670</sup> David Stevens was familiar with Thomas Wood Stevens as Director of the Goodman

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<sup>665</sup> Donna Rose Feldman, "An Historical Study of Thomas Wood Stevens' Globe Theatre Company 1934-1937" (Dissertation: State University of Iowa, June 1953); 18-9.

<sup>666</sup> Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago to unidentified recipient, 19 August 1934, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>667</sup> David H. Stevens, New York to William A. Slade, Washington 28 May 1934, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>668</sup> David H. Stevens, New York to Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago, 23 March 1934, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>669</sup> David H. Stevens, New York to Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago, 23 March 1934, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>670</sup> James Allen Smith, "Historical Perspectives on Foundation Support for the Humanities," *Foundation Funding for the Humanities: An Overview of Current and Historical Trends* (The Foundation Center in cooperation with the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, June 2004); 17.

Theatre from 1925-30. Gaining T. W. Stevens' approval in the spring of 1934, David Stevens briefed William Slade, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, of Globe Theatre Productions' Shakespeare film plan.<sup>671</sup>

Meanwhile, T. W. Stevens contacted his friends, writer and magazine editor Webb Waldron and poet Marion Patton Waldron. He inquired about the possibility for Amherst trustee Cornelius Howard Patton (Marion Patton Waldron's uncle) to show support for his proposal. Patton expressed interest in Stevens' plan, but stressed, "you should know my influence over policies of Folger Library is very small."<sup>672</sup> William Slade presented the proposal to Patton and other members of the Folger Library Committee, comprised of Amherst trustees. The description of the project, recorded in the minutes of the Committee meeting, reads:

There is laid before the committee a proposal that the Folger Library cooperate with the Rockefeller Foundation in the presentation in our Theatre during coming months of certain Shakespearean plays being presented at the Century of Progress Fair at Chicago during the summer under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation. The suggestion was that these plays subsequently be presented at the Folger Theatre and that films of them be made, these films to be the property of the Folger Library and that the films might be a source of income to the Folger Library through rentals to interested institutions, etc. The plan included the suggestion of a subvention by the

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<sup>671</sup> David H. Stevens, New York to William A. Slade, Washington 28 May 1934, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>672</sup> Telegram from Mrs. Webb Waldron, Westport, Connecticut to Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago 6 June 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

Rockefeller Foundation sufficient to cover all costs of production of plays and making of the films, etc.<sup>673</sup>

From this description of the project, the Folger Shakespeare Library would in essence rubber stamp Stevens' productions with their approval without first confirming the company's artistic merit. Mrs. Folger, well-practiced in saying no to requests for funding theatrical productions, cautioned the committee on associating the Library with sub-par productions. Mrs. Folger warned, "we should be careful not to involve the Folger Library in anything of the sort if in any way it fell short of the highest standards of procedure and production."<sup>674</sup> The Committee voted to approve the proposal, although they referred the matter to Stanley King and Joseph Quincy Adams, deferring the final consideration of the project to them. Adams then traveled to Chicago to view the Globe Theatre Productions' work at the Chicago World's Fair.

On his return from Chicago, Emily Folger expressed to Adams her keen interest in his reaction to the Globe Players' productions.<sup>675</sup> After Adams reported his findings to Stanley King the decision was made to pass on Stevens' Shakespeare film proposal. Adams wrote David Stevens and Thomas Wood Stevens to inform them of the Library's final decision. Adams shared that the trustees viewed it not the right time for the Library to undertake such a project. He stressed that if the Library had

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<sup>673</sup> "Amherst Trustees Minutes, Folger Shakespeare Library Committee," 12 June 1934, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library, Amherst.

<sup>674</sup> "Amherst Trustees Minutes, Folger Shakespeare Library Committee," 12 June 1934. Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library, Amherst.

<sup>675</sup> Emily Folger, Glen Cove to Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington, 17 July 1934, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. In her letter Emily Folger confused the name of the company referring to them as the 'Rockefeller Players.' She basically conflated the correct name of the Globe Players with the Rockefeller Foundation, the philanthropic organization that offered funding to the Shakespeare filming scheme proposed by T. W. Stevens.

firmly established a reputation as a leading institution for advanced research and publication by 1934 it would have considered undertaking such a partnership in a program that was intended to primarily benefit humanities education at the college and high school level.<sup>676</sup>

The Folger Committee had approved the idea of the project before the matter was turned over to Adams and Kings' final consideration. Emily Folger's warning may have been the impetus to send Adams' out to Chicago to vet the company's work, or it may have been a decision made by Adams and King. Either way, Adams' assessment of Steven's company influenced the decision to turn down Stevens' proposal.<sup>677</sup>

Considering what Adams encountered when visiting the Merrie England Exhibition at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair aids in understanding what Adams, King and Mrs. Folger may have found objectionable. In Adams' letter informing David Stevens of the Library's decision to turn down the film proposal, Adams' mentioned that if "some other organization" were to make the same request of the Library at a later time with the intention to film Shakespearean productions in the "true Elizabethan manner" then the Library would take it under due consideration.<sup>678</sup> Adams statement suggests he or other Amherst Trustees took issue with Stevens' production methods that promoted "the popularization of Shakespeare's plays" at the

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<sup>676</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington to David H. Stevens, New York, (copy to Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago), 14 August 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>677</sup> Searches for the report containing Adams' findings of the Globe Theatre productions proved unsuccessful at the Rockefeller Foundation Archives, The Folger Shakespeare Library and the Amherst University Library Special Collection, Amherst.

<sup>678</sup> Letter from Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington to David Stevens, New York (copy to Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago), 14 August 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection, (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.



Century of Progress Exhibition.<sup>679</sup> The truncated versions of the plays cut by Stevens, Payne and Vielhelm became, as described by the *Daily Boston Globe*, part of their “own particular version” of Shakespeare they presented to the public.<sup>680</sup> Cutting the plays to run forty to fifty minutes profited the theatre company: first, it allowed for numerous audience change-overs during the course of a day greatly increasing their profit margin and second, it promoted the audience’s engagement from wandering that a full length production might have caused.<sup>681</sup> Stevens acknowledged in his first correspondence with William Slade in 1934 that he intended to produce “practically complete productions” for the proposed film scheme, noting the difference between what he proposed and the “tabloid” productions that were currently running in Chicago.<sup>682</sup> Considering Emily Folger favored the First Folio text of Shakespeare’s plays above other editions, it is understandable that she would have disapproved of any production of Shakespeare shown in the Theatre that cut so much of the text. In 1907 she noted with joy that a production of *The Taming of the Shrew* starring E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe at the Shubert Theatre in New York had reinstated much more of the Shakespeare’s text than other contemporary productions. From Mrs. Folger: “[a] great rejoice – much more the completeness of the text given so far as the

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<sup>679</sup> Charles Collins, “Globe Theatre Players will Appear at San Diego Fair,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 15 May 1935; 13.

<sup>680</sup> “News About the Players,” *Daily Boston Globe*, 17 March 1935; A42.

<sup>681</sup> By the close of their 1934 season at the Chicago World’s Fair the Globe Theatre Company had seven productions running in rotating repertory, with five to seven productions running each day. See “Thousands see Shakespeare in Tabloid at Fair; And Globe Players Show They Can Stand Grind,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 21 October 1934; 17.

<sup>682</sup> Letter from Thomas Wood Stevens, Chicago to William Slade, Washington, 11 June 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection, (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

K [Katherine] and P [Petruchio] part of the story is concerned. The Bianca part was cut and the Induction was not given at all.”<sup>683</sup>

Another facet of the Chicago productions that Adams may have found lacking was the experience and the accomplishment of the acting company and the productions’ overall level of professionalism. David Stevens traveled to Chicago in July 1934 to see three productions of T. W. Stevens’ company, *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *Dr. Faustus*. He thought the productions showed “promise of development into full-length versions,” and that “a number of the actors...were entirely satisfactory.”<sup>684</sup> Yet, after this visit, David Stevens was not entirely convinced T. W. Stevens and his company could produce the type of full-length productions that would merit the expense of filming them. He advised T. W. Stevens to take six to eight of the full-length productions on tour for a year so, ensuring that “there could be before us all [David Stevens, T. W. Stevens, Joseph Quincy Adams and the Amherst Trustees] a strong body of evidence as to the actors and the stage effects that should be changed for the special purpose [of filming them].”<sup>685</sup> Unfortunately, T. W. Stevens was not given the opportunity to consider David Stevens’ advice. Less than two weeks later Joseph Quincy Adams’ wrote to

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<sup>683</sup> Emily Folger, “Plays I Have Seen,” 38. Folger Collection, Box 38, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>684</sup> David Stevens, Ephraim, Wisconsin to Thomas Wood Stevens, Niagara Falls, New York 2 August 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

<sup>685</sup> David Stevens, Ephraim, Wisconsin to Thomas Wood Stevens, Niagara Falls, New York 2 August 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

David Stevens and T. W. Stevens to inform them that regretfully it had been decided between a few members of the Trustees to pass on the proposal.<sup>686</sup>

For Emily Folger, it appears the carnival atmosphere found at the fair which promoted popular entertainment for enjoyment by the masses did not conform to the type of productions or audiences the co-founder envisioned would visit the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Emily Folger held a keen interest in providing smart entertainment for a learned audience. T. W. Stevens' enterprise at the Chicago World's Fair catered to a general audience's appreciation of Shakespeare within the milieu of popular entertainment. Stevens and Payne's 'modified Elizabethan staging' practices applied to 'tabloid' productions of Shakespeare may not have measured up with Adams' or Mrs. Folger's interpretation of staging plays in the 'Elizabethan manner' fit for the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

An example of Emily Folger's conviction of taste is provided in a letter written by her to Joseph Quincy Adams after his return from viewing T. W. Stevens' company's work in Chicago. Mrs. Folger explained, "[w]hen I was asked at the Trustees meeting, what I thought of the plan for the appearance of the Chicago players in our Library, I said, 'I think it premature.'" I am sure that its standard of accomplishment is not high eno'[enough] to meet with Mr. Folger's hope for a model shown in our little theatre. Mr. Slade says that an old lady visitor said to him, 'This is a nice little place. How can I arrange to have my grand-daughter act Sis Hopkins here.' Your [Adams'] quotation from Shakespeare gives Mr. Folger's view, "one

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<sup>686</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, Washington to David Stevens, New York 14 August 1934. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson. The few members of the Trustees were most likely Stanley King and Justice Stone with advisement from Joseph Quincy Adams.

judicious spectator pleased rather than a whole theatre of others.”<sup>687</sup> To explain this quote by Mrs. Folger, Sis Hopkins was the character of an unsophisticated teen-ager from a southern Indiana hill-billy family from the comedy *Zeb* which was written towards the end of the nineteenth century by Samuel M. Young Jr. Rose Melville originated the role of Sis and for twenty years played the role in new plays and musicals eventually starring as Sis in silent films and finally became the advisor on the 1919 movie “Sis Hopkins” that starred Mabel Normand in the title role.<sup>688</sup> The ‘others’ referenced in Emily Folger’s quote above, alludes to the general public who, from her viewpoint, may possess the capacity to appreciate only ‘lowly’ or ‘artless’ popular entertainment. Conversely, the “one judicious spectator pleased” refers to a more cultivated and educated audience that could appreciate the finer nuances provided in the work of a poet like William Shakespeare. The Folgers were not alone in their perspective on art versus entertainment.

Lawrence Levine described the removal of Shakespeare’s plays from forms of popular entertainment towards the end of the nineteenth century. With this development is coupled the claiming of Shakespeare and his works by upper-class and educated elitists as belonging to their social sphere. This last description could be aptly applied to Henry Folger and his quest to purchase and ‘hoard’ every piece of Shakespeariana available. So much so that from the other side of the Atlantic complaints echoed that Folger’s collecting was a great cultural loss to England.<sup>689</sup> In

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<sup>687</sup> Emily Folger to Joseph Quincy Adams, 23 July 1934, Folger Collection, Box 58, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington; 1.

<sup>688</sup> Tribstar, “A star in the Valley: Rose Melville helped pioneer the theatre genre,” viewed 3 April 2005. Available at: [http://www.tribstar.com/articles/2005/03/15/features/valley\\_life/v101 prt](http://www.tribstar.com/articles/2005/03/15/features/valley_life/v101 prt)

<sup>689</sup> Robert M. Smith, “The Formation of Shakespeare Libraries in America,” *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 4 no. 3 (July, 1929), 73.

Levine's words Shakespeare was "transformed from a playwright for the general public into one for a specific audience."<sup>690</sup> One could argue that the Reading Room policies of the Folger Shakespeare Library followed this process as well. Access to the Library's reading room and collection was from the beginning dictated by an individual's ability to achieve a certain level of education or professional stature. Emily Folger's letter to Joseph Quincy Adams indicates that the co-founders envisioned performances at their Theatre would possess artistic merit meant for the appreciation a learned and cultured audience could offer.

Thomas Wood Stevens approached other universities about his filming Shakespeare productions scheme as the success of his Globe Theatre productions continued at expositions in San Diego, Dallas and Cleveland. Stevens described his plan as requiring:

mainly exploitation and management. We have an entirely new attack on the production of Shakespeare, and the greatest element in the Shakespeare audience, the educational crowd, seems to accept this attack as the right one. It only needs organized exploitation to bring in the business.<sup>691</sup>

Stevens eventually modified the plan, expanding it to include a training program for advanced students to study the method of modified Elizabethan staging. Productions mounted by the students would be filmed and distributed in the same way described

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<sup>690</sup> Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1988), 56.

<sup>691</sup> Donna Rose Feldman, "An Historical Study of Thomas Wood Stevens' Globe Theatre Company 1934-1937" (Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953); 143.

in his original plan to the Folger Shakespeare Library in 1934. While finding Stevens' idea interesting, none provided financial support or built a globe reconstruction for the project. In August 1939 Stevens attempted to submit his modified plan with the addition of the training program to the Folger Shakespeare Library. Again he tried to use his personal connection to Amherst trustee Cornelius Howard Patton by first submitting the plan to Patton's niece. Introducing the scheme, he wrote to Marion Patton Webb:

The idea has been simmering for a long time, and no end of people have been talking about the sterility of the present plan at the Folger; scholars go to the Huntington instead of the Folger for very good reasons; and even this plan won't completely change all that. I never knew just why Dr. Stevens' offer of the film plan in 1934 was rejected, but there seemed to be a feeling that it would be too much trouble – even though it would have offered the Library a large income.<sup>692</sup>

Unfortunately, Patton died before he had a chance to engage Stevens in discussion about the new proposal. His niece, Marion Patton Waldron expressed her admiration for Stevens' proposal, and encouraged him to continue searching for a suitable institution to provide financing. Stevens' letters to Patton alludes to criticism of the Library's restricting policies by a number of individuals. In her reply to Stevens, Marion Waldron offered her own criticism of the Library. The contents of her letter to Stevens, provides an insight into the perception of the Library during this period and

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<sup>692</sup> Unsigned letter from Thomas Wood Stevens, Stanford, CA to Marion Patton Waldron, 19 August 1939, Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

is specifically informative of the frustration experienced by some that the Library did not engage the Theatre in any sort of public program. Marion “Pat” Waldron both cheers and laments to Stevens:

[y]our scheme is magnificent. I am sure that it must have interested Uncle Cornelius deeply, for he was a very live person, and I should at least liked to have asked him why the Folger is so dead...[Waldon] Webb thinks the Folger is hopeless. He looked it over with the idea of an article (at Uncle C’s suggestion) and the attitude and atmosphere repelled him. Why, your scheme would actually bring people there! However, I don’t think one should be sure that it’s impossible. We can find out who the other Amherst men on the board are. Webb is of course, much impressed by your plan...Is the possibility of Rockefeller money tied with Folger alone? What a magnificent thing for any great University! Of course it means a reproduction of the Globe. And of course it ought to mean a great Shakespeare collection and center. Hang it! We must think of other approaches to the Folger!<sup>693</sup>

In a subsequent letter to Stevens, Marion Webb again shared her and her husband’s unfavorable opinions of the Library’s practices, in particular focusing the faulty (in her opinion) acquisition policy pursued by Joseph Quincy Adams. In an extremely candid manner she confesses to Stevens,

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<sup>693</sup> Signed letter from Marion Patton Walden to Thomas Wood Stevens, n.d. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

I have been talking about your plan again to Webb. He says that the Folgerites were shocked when he asked if students working for a doctor's degree might do research there – Oh, no! Nobody but a few supreme scholars who have already made a name in the field! So you see how revolutionary anything which would put people, or school-children in touch with Shakespeare would be. Yet the librarian [Adams] has had the fascinating idea of gathering the finest and most complete collection to show what England was like when America was founded – that is in Shakespeare's time. Fascinating, that is, if the American people ever learn anything from or about it. Yet, as you notice, leading away from Will [Shakespeare], and drama. Their latest triumphant purchase, putting them ahead of Huntington is a bunch of sermons, illuminating the time. You [Stevens' proposal] would beat them right out of their...mausoleum into the sunlight where people work – and play...<sup>694</sup>

It would be very difficult if not impossible to ascertain how many others shared the opinions expressed by Marion Webb to Thomas Wood Stevens. But it is safe to assume that the couple's opinions were not held alone. Stevens would not find a home for his "Shakespeare in Action" program. The modified Elizabethan staging developed by Ben Iden Payne and followed by Stevens, however, did influence

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<sup>694</sup> Marion Patton Waldron to Thomas Wood Stevens, n.d. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library.



Angus Bowmer to found the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 1935.<sup>695</sup> The 1935 California Pacific International Exposition Exhibition in San Diego spawned the Old Globe Theatre, a permanent regional theatre in Balboa Park. Stevens' wife wrote, that her husband linked his singular greatest achievement to his involvement with Globe Theatre Productions, Inc. This venture built four Globe Theatre reconstructions and assembled a strong ensemble company of young actors, many of whom went on to successful careers in New York and Hollywood. They "played at four successive Expositions, and were on the road for three years, playing to paid audiences that numbered well over two million people."<sup>696</sup>

Section 4: "Julius Caesar" and the Amherst Masquers at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre

Seventeen years would pass after the Library opened before a production of Shakespeare was seen at the theatre. By then, co-founder Emily Folger and the second Director of the Library, Joseph Quincy Adams, had passed away and Amherst President and trustee Stanley King had retired. During King's and Adams' tenure the Library never attempted to stage a production in the Theatre, focusing instead on cataloguing and building the collection. Emily Folger had helped plan a handful of programs at the theatre before her death, mostly dramatic readings of selections of Shakespeare and a singular intimate musical concert. Her attempt to establish a permanent program in the theatre, a school of elocution, did not develop beyond its early inception. With the Folgers, Adams and King absent from the Library's

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<sup>695</sup> Angus Bowmer, *The Ashland Elizabethan Stage: its genesis, development, and use* (Ashland, Oregon: Oregon Shakespeare Festival Association, 1976); 10.

<sup>696</sup> Melvin R. White, "Thomas Wood Stevens: Creative Pioneer" *Educational Theatre Journal* 3, No. 4 (Dec., 1951); 290.

operations, a new era began at the library with the appointment of a second regularly appointed Library Director after Adams. In July 1948 Louis B. Wright (1900 - 1984) began his appointment as the new Director of the Library. Wright, appointed by the Amherst trustees in October 1947 came to the Folger Shakespeare Library after “a distinguished career at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, California.”<sup>697</sup> The Amherst trustees intended for Wright to make the Library “more useful and more accessible, as well as more generally known to the public.”<sup>698</sup> Wright saw hosting a play in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre one way to accomplish this goal.

Wright hoped the 1949 production of *Julius Caesar* by the student group the Amherst Masquers would boost the Library’s public profile. Unfortunately, once the opportunity arose to finally mount a full production, unforeseen complications presented themselves to Library officials. How library officials coped with these difficulties help to create an atmosphere at the Library that has been referred to as an anti-theatrical prejudice.<sup>699</sup>

Unbeknownst to Wright and other Amherst trustees, the Theatre did not hold a District of Columbia occupancy permit allowing the Library to charge the public admission to productions.<sup>700</sup> While the production of *Julius Caesar* completed its week-long run at the Theatre in 1949, objections by District of Columbia officials

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<sup>697</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of The Folger Shakespeare Library*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950); 44.

<sup>698</sup> “Director Outlines His Plans,” *Washington Post* 28 June 1948; 8.

<sup>699</sup> Christopher Scully, *Constructed Places: Shakespeare’s American Playhouses*, Dissertation, Tufts, (May 2008); 171-2.

<sup>700</sup> Richard L. Coe, “The Folger is Eager to Use its Stage,” *Washington Post* 11 January 1950; B8.

made it necessary to abandon plans for a production of *Hamlet* a year later.<sup>701</sup> In 1951, two years after the production of *Julius Caesar* Wright declared in a Folger Shakespeare Library newsletter (like Joseph Quincy Adams had done years ago that), “the little theatre is an exhibit and is not a practical playhouse.”<sup>702</sup> The edition of this newsletter reintroduces the Folger-Contract myth that Joseph Quincy Adams referred to in a *Dramatics* magazine article in 1945: that Henry Folger, through a contractual agreement with District of Columbia officials, made the theatre so no plays could be produced in it. While Wright would introduce additional reasons during his tenure to explain why the theatre was not used for productions (an analysis of the various reasons offered by Wright takes place below), Folger’s ‘personal’ contractual agreement with D.C. officials had been consistently presented as the primary cause.

Adams’ and Wright’s use of this myth – of Henry Folger swooping in to save the integrity of the Elizabethan style interior of the library and theatre at the sacrifice of any theatrical productions held in the Theatre – could be viewed as sacrificing what the Folgers originally intended for the space for the greater good of the entire project. But this also shifts any claim of responsibility of not using the theatre space for more public programs during the first forty years away from those running the library. In essence this myth of origin ‘lays the blame’ on the deceased founder, someone who is unable to defend or explain their reasoning for prohibiting productions to be performed in the theatre.

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<sup>701</sup> Paul D. Weathers, Amherst to Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, Philadelphia, 7 November 1950, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>702</sup> Louis B. Wright, “No Theatre But a Period Room, January 15, 1951” *The Folger Shakespeare Library: Two Decades of Growth*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1968); 55.

How was this myth rediscovered? As mentioned above, in the spring of 1949 the Folger Elizabethan Theatre was put to use for the first time for a production of *Julius Caesar*. Students in the dramatic club the Amherst Masquers made up the cast (along with two women in the roles of Portia and Calpurnia, one a wife of a Masquer and the other a resident of Amherst, Massachusetts).<sup>703</sup> The week long run of the production that utilized early modern production practices, culminated in a national television broadcast of the performance sponsored by the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company and the National Broadcast Channel (NBC). The Library profited from its unique trustee relationship with Amherst College in this instance for the Executive Vice-President of NBC in 1949, Charles R. Denney, graduated from Amherst in 1933.<sup>704</sup>

In a Library newsletter Director Wright wrote about the upcoming production in a guarded manner, expressing an underlying wariness of the upcoming event. The newsletter, introduced by Wright, was intended to be one of the Library's new public programs whose aim, like that of the production of *Julius Caesar*, was to acquaint a larger portion of the general public about the Library and its mission.<sup>705</sup> Other programs introduced during Wright's tenure at the Library included more opportunities for resident fellowships for scholars, and a collaborative relationship with the scholarly journal *Shakespeare Quarterly*.<sup>706</sup> Wright was also interested in

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<sup>703</sup> Sonia Stein, "NBC to Show Amherst's 'Julius Caesar' on Video Today," *Washington Post* 3 April 1949; L1.

<sup>704</sup> Sonia Stein, "NBC to Show Amherst's 'Julius Caesar' on Video Today," *Washington Post* 3 April 1949; L1. The Folger Shakespeare Library holds a video copy of this production in its collection.

<sup>705</sup> Martha Branon Grogan, *Henry Clay Folger as Book Collector and the Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library*, (M.S. Thesis University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1972); 39.

<sup>706</sup> Assistant Director of the Folger Library James G. McManaway became the editor of *Shakespeare Quarterly* in 1951. At this time the publication was still sponsored by the Shakespeare Association of America, an association founded in New York in November 1923. O. B. Hardison suggested the

forming working relationships with other colleges, an idea not realized until 1970 under the direction of next Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, O. B. Hardison Jr., in the form of the Folger Institute.<sup>707</sup>

Although the theatrical production of *Julius Caesar* generated a great deal of buzz with the general public, there appears a guarded enthusiasm for the upcoming theatrical venture in excerpts from Wright's newsletter. Wright expressed hope in a *Washington Post* article in April 1950 that each year one or two college drama groups, like the Amherst Masquers could be invited to perform a production at the Folger. In Wright's point of view, "commercial use of the theatre would violate the purpose and intention of the research foundation," but productions educational in nature would better suit the Library.<sup>708</sup> Next, Wright expressed an embarrassment at the large demand for tickets by "drama-starved Washington" a month before the production opens. Wright's wariness of the theatrical production is evident when he declared that the Library and Amherst College will produce the play at a great financial loss. Finally, Wright expressed amazement at a large oil company's willingness to underwrite the production's national broadcast and the care shown by engineers from NBC when setting up for the project.<sup>709</sup>

It is understandable that Wright was cautious about the Library's hosting a group of college students for a week, not to mention the disruption caused to the research

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Folger Library and Amherst College take over the sponsorship of publishing *Shakespeare Quarterly* early in his directorship at the library. The change was approved by all parties on 19 May 1972. See Mary C. Hyde, "The Shakespeare Association of America to the Folger Shakespeare Library on Its 40th Anniversary 23 April 1972," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 23 No. 2 (Spring, 1972); 223. This organization is a separate entity from the Shakespeare Association of America founded in 1972.

<sup>707</sup> "Director Outlines His Plans," *Washington Post* 28 June 1948; 8.

<sup>708</sup> Lee Grove "Folger Theatre Use for Drama Uncertain," *Washington Post* 3 April 1949; M17.

<sup>709</sup> Louis B. Wright, *Two Decades of Growth: An Informal Account*, (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 1968); 7.

institution by network technicians working setting up equipment for the production's broadcast. This event would be a huge departure from the Library's regular programs offered to the public of artifacts from the Library's collection staged in the exhibition hall and the occasional lecture or musical recital held in the theatre. Fortunately, the event succeeded in its goal of alerting the public to the existence of the Folger. The *Washington Post* alone wrote five articles about the production in the early part of 1949.<sup>710</sup> In addition, the hour and a half broadcast of the production by NBC reached cities on the east coast and mid-west of the United States. Along with the production of *Julius Caesar* the broadcast began with camera set-up of one of Shakespeare's first folios owned by the Library, a reminder to the audience that a research institution was hosting the event.<sup>711</sup> During the ten minute intermission Library Director Wright and the director of the production Dr. Curtis Canfield<sup>712</sup>, (1903 – 1986) participated in a live interview about the Library and the production, an unprecedented opportunity to inform the public about the Folger Shakespeare Library and its activities. Yet, with all of these positive results the *Julius Caesar* production provided the Library another

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<sup>710</sup> Sonia Stein, "NBC to Show Amherst's 'Julius Caesar' on Video Today," *Washington Post* 1923-1954, 3 April 1949, L1; Lee Grove "Folger Theatre Use for Drama Uncertain," *Washington Post* 1923-1954, 3 April 1949; M17; Richard L. Coe, "Second Fiddle Suite Carson," *Washington Post* 16 March 1949; 20; Richard Coe, "Julius Caesar Staged at Folger Theater" *Washington Post* 29 March 1949; 7, "Folger to Present 'Julius Caesar' for Six Performances" *Washington Post* 13 March 1949; L2.

<sup>711</sup> Sonia Stein, "NBC to Show Amherst's 'Julius Caesar' on Video Today," *Washington Post* 3 April 1949, L1.

<sup>712</sup> Dr. Canfield, an Amherst College graduate, accepted a teaching position at the college upon graduating. Canfield taught at Amherst eventually appointed chairman of the drama department before accepting a position at Yale University in 1955. At Yale he became the first Dean of Yale's graduate School of Drama. Canfield, called "one of the nation's leading drama educators, finished his teaching career with a six year stint as professor of theatre arts at the University of Pittsburgh. He also directed productions of *Othello* and *Richard III* for television production. His book on directing, *The Craft of Play Directing* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), was commended for "[h]is observations on the direction of verse drama." See Lowell Manful, *The Craft of Play Directing* Review, *Educational Theatre Journal* Vol. 16 No. 1 (March 1964); 85, Dena Kleiman, "F. Curtis Canfield, 82, Dead; A Leading Drama Educator," *New York Times* 26 June 1986; 29, "F. Curtis Canfield; Yale Dean, TV Drama Pioneer," *Los Angeles Times* 28 June 1986.

development that proved extra challenging for the Library staff. The local municipal commissioners objected to the use of the space previously referred to as a Lecture Room for theatrical productions because it did not meet contemporary safety standards for theatres.<sup>713</sup>

The Amherst trustees, inspired by the *Julius Caesar* production began planning for a production of *Hamlet* the following year. Trying to ascertain the possibility of hosting another production Amherst Treasurer Paul D. Weathers, contacted the architectural firm where Paul Cret had been a founding partner in November 1950. Weathers explained to Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson (H2L2) the Library's attempt to mount another production in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre and the difficulties experienced from the District of Columbia officials. Weathers inquired if the firm possessed any information regarding the Library's attempt to file for an occupancy permit. William Livingston, who had worked with Cret on the Folger Library project and obviously aware of the Library's track record of producing plays at the theatre, promptly replied to Weathers correspondence, sharing the sentiment that, "I know, if Mr. Cret were alive, he also would be happy to learn that, at last, the theater was being used for the purposes for which it was designed."<sup>714</sup> Livingston continues, informing Weathers of their struggle in getting approval to build the theatre as designed. Livingston writes,

[w]e took up all the plans with the District Authorities to get their approval. The Theatre was a stumbling block. At one time it appeared

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<sup>713</sup> Paul D. Weathers, Amherst to architectural firm Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, Philadelphia, 2 November 1950, Folger Collection, Box 58A Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>714</sup> Paul D. Weathers, Amherst to Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, Philadelphia, 2 November 1950 and William Livingston, Philadelphia to Paul D. Weathers, Amherst 3 November 1950, Folger Collection, Box 58A Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

that if the theater was not made a modern up-to-date theater with proscenium, asbestos curtain, etc. it would not be permitted to be built. With our joint efforts, that is Mr. McKnew and our office, we made an appeal to the authorities and a special meeting of the District Commissioner was called and the plans, with many minor changes, were approved. However the theater had to be labeled a Lecture Hall... We doubt very much that “an occupancy permit” was ever secured by the builder as they probably only secured the necessary building permits.<sup>715</sup>

In reply to Livingston’s letter Weathers reveals that the Library was presently experiencing the same type of trouble with D.C. officials and that he too doubts an occupancy permit was ever obtained. Weathers calls the commissioners’ tactics a “last line of defense” in order to assure that no plays, Shakespearian or otherwise, would be mounted in the Theatre. Finally, Weathers shared with Livingston that he was not hopeful the theatre would be used for the proposed production of *Hamlet*.<sup>716</sup> The plans to host another production by the Amherst Masquers were soon abandoned after the exchange of these correspondences.

Towards the end of his tenure as director of the Folger Shakespeare Library Louis B. Wright again discussed the subject of the theatre, reiterating the reasons why it was

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<sup>715</sup> William Livingston, Philadelphia to Paul D. Weathers, Amherst 3 November 1950, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>716</sup> Paul D. Weathers, Amherst to Harbeson, Hough, Livingston & Larson, Philadelphia, 7 November 1950, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.



not used for theatrical productions. These statements, made late in his tenure as Director, demonstrate a developed rhetoric of “outlandish” proportion suggesting, as Christopher Sculley observed in his 2008 dissertation “Constructed Places: Shakespeare’s American Playhouses,” an, “anti-theatrical bias at the library.”<sup>717</sup>

Wright stressed first that if the theatre were to be used for performances of plays the Library would not be able to function as a research facility for, “any noise on the stage is transmitted through ventilating ducts to the reading room.”<sup>718</sup> Second, he recapped the story of Henry Folger making a deal with District of Columbia officials that the theatre would not be used for performances in exchange for permission to build an Elizabethan style theatre space that did not contain required contemporary safety features. Wright also cited that the theatre stage is too small for producing most plays and that the audience and actor areas were inadequate. Finally, Wright mentioned that because the theatre had been treated as an exhibit since the Library opened members of the public, particularly school-age children, expected the theatre space made available for viewing during the Library’s operating hours.

Examining Wright’s comments assists in unpacking the developed history of the theatre space up to the date of Wright’s writing in 1966. The first problem cited by Wright, of noise transmitted from the theatre to the reading room could have been solved with the help of a structural engineer. A desire to solve that problem, however, needed to be present first. Wright’s writing demonstrates his concern with the Library’s research operations taking precedence over other possible programs.

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<sup>717</sup> Christopher Scully, *Constructed Places: Shakespeare’s American Playhouses*, (Dissertation: Tufts University, 2008); 171-2.

<sup>718</sup> Louis B. Wright, *The Folger Library: Two Decades of Growth, An Informal Account*, (Charlottesville: Virginia University Press, 1968); 267.

This attitude was shared by Library officials appointed before Wright so it is not surprising that the same attitude is adopted by him. Jed I. Bergman observed this attitude during Wright's and Adams' tenure at the library in his 1996 study *Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector*, noting that "the institutional ethos that had characterized the Folger in its early years was resistant to such activities [theatre productions], which would inevitably detract from the primacy of the rare book collection and from scholarship."<sup>719</sup> As Wright mentioned, programming the theatre space for lectures or conferences falls within the intended use desired by Henry and Emily Folger, although it denied their original wish for original practices productions of Shakespeare to be staged in the space. Wright's insistence that the Theatre was made available for visiting school children at the expense of theatrical productions negates the founders' desire for a larger portion of the public to be exposed to the space. Wright's satisfaction with viewing the space as a permanent exhibit is an overall strange attitude to take, one akin to being content to housing the Shakespeariana collection the Folgers amassed and then not allowing anyone to interact with the materials. Yet, amazingly, a version of this policy prevailed in the Folger reading room after the Folger Shakespeare Library first opened. Scholars were required to submit research requests to Folger librarians who would then consult materials in the collection, then returning to visiting scholars written answers to their inquiries. This occurred partly because it took the Library staff many years to implement a catalogue system for the Library's materials. But it was also due to Adams' prevailing attitude about the institution when he first served as the Director

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<sup>719</sup> Jed I Bergman with William G. Bowen and Thomas I. Nygren, *Managing Change in the Nonprofit Sector: Lessons from the Evolution of Five Independent Research Libraries*, " (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); 80.

of Research before promoted to the level of Director of the Library. The stricter policy developed during Adams' tenure loosened when Wright was appointed Director.

The origin of Wright's opinion that the stage, backstage and audience areas are too small for productions can be traced back to John Cranford Adams. Adams, president of Hofstra College from 1944 to 1964, held one of the first research fellowships at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Adams is probably best known for his book *The Globe Playhouse: Its Design and Equipment* developed from his dissertation, "The structure of the Globe Playhouse Stage."<sup>720</sup> Adams conducted research for his dissertation while on fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library. Adams designed a reconstructed Globe playhouse executed into a three-dimensional model by Irwin Smith.<sup>721</sup> In 1950, Adams loaned the model to the Folger Shakespeare Library and gave a lecture at the Library on the staging of Shakespeare's plays. During this lecture Adams "pointed out that the little theatre in the Folger Library is too small to permit the performance of most Shakespearean plays without doing violence to the text."<sup>722</sup> As Christopher Scully observed Wright (and John C. Adams) held the sanctity of Shakespeare's text above the negative treatment it would receive in performance on the Elizabethan-style stage.<sup>723</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> John Cranford Adams, *The Globe Playhouse: its design and equipment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942) and John Cranford Adams, "The structure of the Globe Playhouse Stage," (Dissertation: Cornell University, 1935).

<sup>721</sup> Irwin Smith, *Shakespeare's Globe Playhouse: a modern reconstruction in text and scale drawings, based upon the reconstruction of the Globe by John Cranford Adams* (New York: Scribner, 1956).

<sup>722</sup> Louis B. Wright, *The Folger Library: A Decade of Growth: 1950-1960*, (Washington: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1960); 39.

<sup>723</sup> Christopher Scully, *Constructed Places: Shakespeare's American Playhouses*, (Dissertation, Tufts University, 2008); 171.

Wright's comment also suggests he did not fully appreciate how the Folgers imagined the theatre space was to be used. Original practices productions do not necessarily require additional set pieces or a large number of properties. The size of the backstage area, deemed inadequate by Wright, was not necessarily a hindrance for such productions. Furthermore, in Henry Folger's point of view the Theatre was to be an educational experience for the public, not an enterprise aimed to compete with professional theatres.<sup>724</sup> With this in mind, the seating capacity of under 300 for the theatre was intentionally kept at a more modest level.

Wright's statements suggest that he was under mounting pressure to again attempt to stage a production in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Wright managed to finish the rest of his directorship without having to face this challenge, whereas O.B. Hardison, Jr. fully embraced the endeavor. Hardison's tenure at the Library ushered in a new mind-set for the research institution in its views of the theatre. It would be used to acquaint a larger portion of the public to the mission of the Library through a myriad of new public programs. In turn, Hardison hoped of generating more financial support for the entire Library enterprise with a raised public profile provided. Instated as Director in 1969, Hardison scheduled the theatre for free performances of medieval plays by students from Mary Baldwin College.<sup>725</sup> With equally swift action he quelled city officials' objections to the Library mounting professional productions in the Theatre that charged admission. Early in 1970 a flame-proof material was applied to the Theatre's woodwork and after an inspection in April conducted by the

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<sup>724</sup> John F. Harbeson, "Folger Shakespeare Foundation, Notes on meeting at Mr. Folger's office on April 15, 1929," 16 April 1929, Folger Collection, Box 58A, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

<sup>725</sup> O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director, 1968-1969*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1970); 37.

Fire Marshal's Office the Library received a permit to operate a public theatre.<sup>726</sup>

Hardison even admired the resulting sheen the flame-proofing gave the Theatre's woodwork, observing it brought out more of its intricate detail. In his opinion, obtaining the right to produce professional theatre at the Library for a paying public would be a crucial "step in legitimizing the Fogler Theatre as a serious producer of drama."<sup>727</sup> While Hardison's vision for the theatre may not have been exactly what Henry and Emily Folger intended, it outshined the alternative.

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<sup>726</sup> O. B. Hardison, *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director 1969-1970*, ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1971); 37.

<sup>727</sup> O. B. Hardison, *Folger Shakespeare Library Annual Report of the Director 1969-1970*. ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1971); 37.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

After Henry and Emily Folger spent nearly fifty years amassing the largest collection of Shakespeariana in history they conceived of an institution that would cater to credentialed scholars as well as the general public. Scholars would access the collection in the reading room and the general public would interact with materials from the collection in the Exhibition Hall and have the opportunity to attend productions of Shakespeare that followed early modern staging practices. In their conception of a Shakespeare memorial the co-founders intended the study of Shakespeare to take place under one roof, whether from the literary, historical or performance perspective.

This study has focused on the Folger Shakespeare Library's complicated institutional relationship with the Folger Elizabethan Theatre during the first nearly thirty-eight years of the Library's history. According to members of the Amherst Trustees serving on the Folger Shakespeare Library committee in 1933, Henry Folger intended, "his gift [of the Library] should be used for the advancement of literary study in the United States."<sup>728</sup> This institutional vision followed by the library adversely affected the possibility of developing programs at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre, programs that would promote the study of Shakespeare from a performance perspective. Through the library's process of historicizing itself during this time, it developed public relations narratives that emphasized the Library's unique literary mission in America. Linking the beginning of Henry Folger's love of Shakespeare to the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson helped to provide an explanation for the Library's

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<sup>728</sup> "Forward," *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington* ([Washington]: Published for the Trustees of Amherst College, 1933); vii.

existence. Connecting Folger and Emerson's mutual love of the English poet and playwright assisted in reconciling why an American would pursue such a specific, radical, and, well, English passion. Yet, by Henry Folger's own admission, his experience writing an essay on one of Shakespeare's plays and entering it into a competition during his senior year at Amherst sparked his love for Shakespeare. Folger's essay experience required him to engage with Shakespeare in a critical and scholarly manner, a skill he would carry forward the rest of his life. Folger viewed himself as a 'student' of Shakespeare far into his adult life. A view that suggests his engagement with Shakespeare in a scholarly exercise at Amherst became a seminal academic exercise for the future collector. One can imagine, had Folger lived long enough, the Folgers utilizing their collection for their own intellectual pursuits while living for extended periods of time within their private quarters of the library.

Interpreting Henry Folger's decision to place the library in the United States capital as a result of nationalistic impulses is a narrow reading of Folger's interaction with two servants of the United States government. An examination of correspondences shared between Folger and Henry Putnam of the Library of Congress and Congressman Robert Luce suggest a critical negotiation regarding the founding of the Library occurred between these two men and any expressed nationalistic sentiments were very few in number. Another reading of the correspondences between these three men reveals a serious negotiation between Folger and Luce with Putnam acting as mediator between the two. Folger wanted Congress to exclude his land from annexation by the United States government for a new building of the Library of Congress and Luce wanted Folger to break ground on

his library project before pushing for the legislation through Congress as requested by Folger. In addition, the Folgers considered the financial cost of land as well as the cultural impact their library would contribute when choosing the nation's capital. The parcel of land on Capitol Hill acquired by the Folgers cost a great deal less than any site they considered in New York City. Although Washington, D.C. would have forced them to travel more often or even relocate to D.C. in order to use their collection, the city provided a number of benefits unique in its development in the 1920s. First the proximity of the Library of Congress to the Folgers' building promised to be another great resource to researchers. Second, the cultural development of the Washington, D.C. was experiencing healthy increases with the addition of art galleries and museums. Locating the Folger's library, exhibition hall and theatre in Washington D. C. would dramatically add to the cultural landscape that was already experiencing steady growth since the turn of the twentieth century. Yet the Library Trustees did not hold this viewpoint.

As the Trustees favored a more literary-based agenda for the Library reconciliation of Henry and Emily Folger's inclusion of a fully functioning Elizabethan-styled theatre in the building remained elusive. In general the Library tended to dismiss: the historical significance of the theatre's early modern architectural design, and the Folgers' expressed intention for the Theatre to host theatrical productions that followed early modern production practices. Evidence suggests the Trustees never possessed much interest in developing a use for the theatre in the spirit that Henry and Emily Folger intended. They certainly did not produce anything in print that discussed how the co-founders developed their idea for



the Elizabethan-styled theatre. The Folgers, in fact, were avid theatre goers, attending a variety of productions during their marriage, even attending the same production a number of times if they found it to their liking. The Folgers saved their ticket stubs and programs to productions for inclusion in their collection of Shakespeariana, an interesting conscious choice on their part to historicize their theatrical activities.

Emily Folger recorded in a diary comments about the plays she and her husband had attended. She noted her or Mr. Folger's reactions to the production, the size of the audience, the acting ability (or not) of the performers, their diction (or lack thereof), the direction, the use of props, music, and scenic design. The Folgers kept up friendly correspondences over the years with certain performers they admired. The work of Ben Greet enticed the Folgers to attend many productions where he served as producer, director and/or actor. The Folgers' exposure to productions that contained early modern production practices provides insight into how these experiences could have influenced them to want these same types of productions in their own theatre.

The Library's explanation of the theatre's architectural design is reductive of the theatre's historical significance. The various terms employed to describe the space does not do justice to Paul Cret's intricate design that heavily drew from the Fortune Theatre Contract as well as other scholars' work on English early modern theatres. The Folgers' desired a space that would accommodate presentations of Shakespeare's plays using early modern production practices and that is exactly what Paul Cret provided them. Like other scholars of the period who attempted reconstructions of early modern theatres, Cret interpreted the small amount of hard evidence surviving about these types of theatres available to him, namely the Fortune Contract. To fill in

informational gaps about these structures he did what other theatre reconstructionists have done, relied upon extant information from other early modern theatres.

The Folgers' decision to bequest the management of the Folger Shakespeare Library to the Trustees of Amherst College insured their library would be governed by an institution that was committed to education, research and scholarship.

Developing a plan for the use of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre proved to be a challenge for the Trustees. Henry Folger's unexpected death in June 1930 came just five months after ground was broken in the construction of the building. Amherst trustees, learning of the Folgers' gift from an article in the *New York Times* immediately sprang into action to assess the responsibility potentially thrust upon them. Accepting the Folger's bequest the Trustees oversaw the completion of the library's construction with the assistance of Emily Folger. During these early years of the library's operation a triumvirate of individuals appears to have been the driving force behind the library's development: Stanley King (Amherst President, 1932 – 1946), Harlan Fiske Stone (Chairman of the Folger Shakespeare Library Committee, 1932 – 1946) and Joseph Quincy Adams (Supervisor of Research, 1932-1934, Acting Director, 1934-1936, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1936 – 1946).

Founding the private research institution and developing an organizational plan and mission for the library obligated the Trustees to focus on developing the Library side of the Folgers' project. Utilizing the Folger Elizabethan Theatre for productions and thereby integrating it with the Founder's broader mission for the Library as the founders intended was deemed impossible. While true the early modern design of the theatre restricted the legal use of the theatre for commercial productions, other public

programs proposed by Emily Folger and Thomas Wood Stevens, programs that potentially could have circumvented the use restrictions placed upon the theatre, were deemed not desirable or beneficial to the Library's emerging mission.

Emily Folger attempted to foster theatrical performances at the Library in 1934. Edith Wynne Matthison performed readings from *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in celebration of Shakespeare's birthday.<sup>729</sup> Matthison exemplified the type of actor and educator Emily Folger held in high esteem: she possessed a distinguished stage career and was recognized for her abilities in speech and diction. A year after Matthison's appearance at the Folger Shakespeare Library Emily Folger took steps to found a school of elocution in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre.

Emily Folger meant for the candidate she proposed as Elocution Director, English-born Samuel Arthur King, to demonstrate the mission of the proposed elocution school in a program of lectures and performances of selections from *Hamlet* for invited audiences at Amherst College and the Folger Elizabethan Theatre in Washington. Comments from audience members about S. A. King's performances suggest Emily Folger intended her candidate's presentations to demonstrate the value of teaching performance by utilizing the texts of Shakespeare as well as teaching Shakespeare through the lens of performance. As a lecturer of Speech at Bryn Mawr College for over twenty years, King utilized the plays of Shakespeare in his teaching of elocution at the all-female college. He also regularly directed entertainments for the annual May Day celebrations at Bryn Mawr. Aspects of King's book *Graduated Exercises in Elocution*, suggest he aligned his approach to teaching speech with the

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<sup>729</sup> "Shakespeare Day Concerts Planned," *Washington Post* (8 April 1934); A3.

World English movement. A number of speech teachers who promoted World English later pursued careers training actors at colleges and private studios in the United States. Emily Folger's desire to found a school of elocution at the Folger Elizabethan Theatre was deemed an inappropriate and unwanted addition to the Library's mission.

Thomas Wood Stevens' 1934 proposal to film productions of Shakespeare in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre that the Library would then sell or rent to colleges and high schools would have potentially made the library a good deal of money.<sup>730</sup> A subvention was also offered by the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation to offset most of the costs associated with filming the productions. The Amherst Trustees' Committee of the Folger Shakespeare Library approved further assessment of Stevens' proposal in June 1934 even though Emily Folger cautioned the committee of exhibiting any company's work in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre that did not possess the highest standards of professionalism. Stevens' actors from his Globe Theatre Productions, Inc. Company, a very popular attraction at the Merrie England Exhibit during the second summer the Chicago World's Fair, performed truncated versions of Shakespeare's plays in a reconstruction of the Globe Theatre designed by Stevens. Joseph Quincy Adams was sent to Chicago to assess the company's work. Upon his return, Adams wrote to Stevens informing him of the Library's decision to pass on Stevens' proposal. Adams cited the Library deemed establishing a reputation of scholarly excellence more pressing than developing a

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<sup>730</sup> Unsigned letter from Thomas Wood Stevens, Stanford, CA to Marion Patton Waldron, 19 August 1939. Thomas Wood Stevens Collection (MS 002), Special Collections, University of Arizona Library, Tucson.

performance program designed to educate college and high school students about Shakespeare's dramas.

Stevens' continued through the 1930s shopping around his proposal to a number of colleges. He even expanded the plan to include a formal educational program for advanced acting students to study early modern staging practices. Such a program would not have been unlike the graduate program in early modern stage practices at Mary Baldwin College and the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA. Stevens viewed no better home for his program than the Folger Shakespeare Library whose unique relationship with Amherst College would have provided faculty for the program.

Stevens was ultimately unsuccessful in finding a home for his "Shakespeare in Action" plan. Correspondences between Stevens and niece of Amherst Trustee Cornelius Howard Patton, Marion Patton Webb, provide insight into how some held a negative view of the Library's early mission and activities that did not include the study of Shakespeare from a performance perspective. The Library's policy for approving scholars access to the reading room were viewed, as evident in the correspondences between Webb and Stevens, as particularly exclusionary. A policy Steven's asserts resulted in scholars choosing to conduct research at the Huntington Library over the Folger Shakespeare Library.

After the retirement of Stanley King as President of Amherst and the deaths of Director Joseph Quincy Adams and Chief Justice Stone in 1946 the Trustees appointed Louis B. Wright as Director in 1948. Wright had spent 17 years at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California and came to the Folger as a respected

administrator and scholar. The Trustees chose Wright in an attempt to alter the insular atmosphere at the research institution and broaden the Library's public profile. Part of the plan to broaden the Library's mission included finally utilizing the Folger Elizabethan Theatre for a full performance of one of Shakespeare's plays in 1949.

The Amherst Trustees arranged for the student theatre group, the Amherst Masquers, to perform *Julius Caesar*. The production employed early modern staging practices, an element the founders would have greatly appreciated. In addition it was the first live nationally televised broadcast of a production of Shakespeare's plays in the United States. Yet, the Trustees and Wright were soon confronted with the same legal restrictions placed on theatrical productions that charged admission to the theatre. While the production completed its week-long run, Library officials later investigated acquiring approval for a production of *Hamlet* proposed for the spring of 1951. Correspondences between an official at Amherst and Paul Cret's assistant during the building of the Library reveal that an occupancy permit had never been obtained for the Theatre once the Library opened. By law the theatre required one, unless the Trustees decided to not charge admission to performances of *Hamlet*. The Trustees opted to forgo the production of *Hamlet* and any possibility to operate the theatre as a functional space for theatrical productions became a closed subject. This Library policy continued for the next twenty years until the founding of the Folger Theatre Group in 1970 by O. B. Hardison, Jr., Louis B. Wright's successor as Library Director.

Hardison, appointed Library Director in 1969 effectively overhauled the Library's mission by introducing a number of new public programs at the library.<sup>731</sup> Hardison's efforts broadened the local appeal of the Library in the Washington, D.C. community and impacted the national profile of the research institution. Hardison viewed devising a way to legally mount professional productions in the Folger Elizabethan Theatre his greatest accomplishment at the Library. In Hardison's opinion, using the Folger Elizabethan Theatre for theatrical productions delivered the "most impact" in its ability to "facilitate...fundraising efforts" and raise the private research institution's public profile.<sup>732</sup>

Considering the parameters of this study it was necessary to focus on the Library's relationship to the Theatre during the first nearly forty years of the Library's existence. Needless to say a lot has happened at the Theatre (and consequently the Library) since O. B. Hardison Jr. founded the Folger Theatre Group in 1970. Analyzing events involving the theatre during its first thirty-eight year existence will hopefully lead to further work that examines the Library and Theatre's relationship once regular productions were introduced at the Theatre. No study to date has looked at how the productions of the theatre may or may not have aligned with the type of productions Henry and Emily Folger intended for the theatre. How often have there been attempts to stage productions with early modern production practices? What has been the cultural or artistic mark of the theatre companies (and there have been a few iterations of them) that have produced at the theatre? The

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<sup>731</sup> Tom Shales, "Folger Shakespeare Library: 40 and Still Having Growing Pains," *Washington Post* (23 April 1972); E1.

<sup>732</sup> Quoted in Myriam Lechuga, "The Saving of the Folger Shakespeare Theatre," (Thesis: American University of Washington, D. C., 1987); 34-5.

Library continued to struggle with reconciling the existence of the theatre within the library building after 1970. This is not more evident than the colorful history of theatre companies that have occupied the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Some work has been done to investigate this 'later' history of the Folger Elizabethan Theatre. Myriam Lechuga's 1987 Thesis "The Saving of the Folger Shakespeare Theatre," investigates the events surrounding the attempt by Amherst Trustees to stop productions and dissolve the theatre company in 1985. In Lechuga's view public outcry at the Trustee's attempt largely contributed to the 'saving' of the Folger Shakespeare Theatre. The outcome of the turmoil meant the end of the Theatre and the Library sharing the same budget. The restructured relationship meant it became an independent entity, responsible for its own fundraising, budget and operations. This may have been a institutional necessity, but how has it further altered from the original intentions of Henry and Emily Folger?



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Folger, Henry C., New York to Mrs. [Mary E.] Charles O'H. Craigie, Brooklyn, 5 June 1923. Folger Collection, Box 15, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

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Program for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with The Woodland Players, under the  
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Society of England March 24 and April 5, 1903. Folger Collection, Box 10,  
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Program for Irving Literary Circle, Third Annual Excursion. Wednesday, 7 June  
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Program to *As You Like It*, Columbia Theatre, Week of Monday 2 December 1902. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

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Program to *As You Like It*, Murray Hill Theatre, Week of Monday 7 March 1904. Folger Collection, Box 10, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

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Program to *Much Ado About Nothing*, Brooklyn Academy of Music, 23 April 1884. Folger Collection, Box 36, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

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Program to *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Murray Hill Theatre, 24 November 1902. Folger Collection, Box 11, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington.

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