

American Book Collector

THE ASSASSINATION INDUSTRY

A Tentative Checklist of Publications on the Murder of President John F. Kennedy

By Thomas M. McDade

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To be presented to the Churches and Generall Court
for their consideration and acceptance,
in the Lord.

The Eighth Moneth Anno 1649

-
- Pfal: 84. 1. *How amiable are thy Tabernacle O Lord of Hosts?*
Pfal: 26. 8. *Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house & the
place where thine honour dwelleth.*
Pfal: 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord that will I seek
after, hat I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the
d. yes of my life to behold the Beauty of the Lord & to
inquire in his Temple.*
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THE ASSASSINATION INDUSTRY

A Tentative Checklist of Publications on the Murder of President John F. Kennedy

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AS THE never ending flow of print on the Kennedy assassination continues, we can soon look for those books which will themselves describe the literature of that event. As the volume, variety, and scope of material, all in some way related to the events of that grim November day, continues, we already see studies of the studies and conclusions drawn from the conclusions. The tide is still flowing, the end is nowhere in sight, and there is now enough in print for the third and fourth generation of works to appear. Quite soon it will be impossible to find one's way through the literature of the case without a guide to that voluminous record.

The popular reader may think only of the books of William Manchester or Mark Lane, but the scholars of the education and professional world are also busy. Papers bearing such weighty titles as "Choice of Defenses Used by Prelateny Children in Reaction to the Assassination" and "Diagnostic and Therapeutic Utilization of Children's Reactions to the President's Death" are but two of a number of similar writings which, when gathered into a bundle, appear under the title, *Children and the Death of a President*. There have been volumes of verse with echoes of "Sail on, sail on, oh Ship of State, Sail on oh Union Strong and Great." Collections of editorials are not lacking and a university press has produced a weighty study of the event and its relation to the communication of news. The A. C. Nielsen Company, which compiles an index of television viewing for its own subscribers, prepared a special report on the TV response to the death of the President. A volume of the sermons underlines for us how history repeats itself; a similar volume was published on the Lincoln panegyrics.

The bulk of the books, however, are devoted to an analysis or commentary on the crime itself. Most of these could be characterized as a pro or con book—meaning it supports or attacks the Warren Report and its central thesis that the murder was solely the work of Lee Harvey Oswald and that there is no evidence of other conspirators. In this brief piece I have no intention of taking sides in that dispute. My sole purpose is to indicate the nature of the works appearing and to examine them as a collector might who contemplated compiling a collection devoted to this sad

event. Signs of the growing collecting on this subject are before us; the latest and most evident is a Kennedy Assassination Bibliography for sale by a California book dealer listing books, pamphlets, and magazines on the subject. This is not the first effort to compile a list of published material on the assassination. When Congressman Theodore Kupferman of New York introduced a resolution (H. Con. Res. 1023) [1966], to create a new commission to investigate the assassination, he recognized the need for an accurate compilation of the books and articles in print. At his request the Library of Congress furnished him with a list of material then available, or known to it to be in print. This list Kupferman appended to the end of his remarks as they appear in the *Congressional Record* and where it filled two pages (*Congressional Record*, Sept. 28, 1966, pp. 23206-7).

The phenomena of volume alone should not be surprising. In the two years after the death of Lincoln there were at least twenty separate publications devoted to it. Few of these, however, were analytical and none primarily critical of the investigation and trial of the conspirators. The first real assault on the government's case in book form was David Miller DeWitt's *The Judicial Murder of Mrs. Surratt*, published in 1895. How thin the case was against Mrs. Surratt can be readily grasped by the fact that while she was hanged, her son, who was a Confederate agent, escaped the country and when finally brought back two years later and tried in a Federal civil court, the Government could not obtain a conviction. Freed, Surratt toured on a lecture circuit discussing the case, finding it as remunerative as many do today.

For the collector who decides to build upon the event there are several categories of material with a wide range in cost and availability. The rarest and most difficult would include all unique, original material related to the event or participants such as letters, notes, tickets, cards, or manuscripts. Such items are few and costly. (Will the Kennedy Bible which disappeared from the plane that day someday reappear?) An idea of the cost of such material can be gained from the prices brought at auctions of letters of Oswald. Charles Hamilton, a New York autograph dealer, has sold a number of Oswald letters at auction in

the past three years. On September 30, 1965, seventeen different Oswald items brought a total of \$7,165, of which sum \$3,000 was paid for a single letter from Oswald in Moscow to his mother expressing his bitterness towards the U. S. Government and his desire to return to the United States. Other items in that sale included an application he had filled out for Albert Schweitzer College in Switzerland, a school promotion certificate, and his notification of acceptance into the Marine Corps.

In another sale in April, 1967, an Oswald letter which was Exhibit No. 183 in the Warren Commission hearings sold for \$1,200. Replete with bad spelling, the letter asked his mother to send some fashion magazines to his wife, Marina, and not to worry about him losing his American citizenship. "I can only do that," he wrote, "if I want too, and I dont want too." At the same sale five curious geometric sketches made by Ruby went to a New York medical researcher for \$625. Such material, however, is for a small number of affluent collectors. Items of general circulation are the domain of the average collector.

The material in magazines is huge. With the thousands of periodicals which appear weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually, each with its special area of coverage and knowledge, even only a small number could be considered. Yet the very nature of these articles, many prepared by scientists or scholars, contain information unobtainable elsewhere. Medical journals report the case from a surgical, medico-legal point of view, law journals discuss legal questions of the investigation and the report; undoubtedly there have been pieces in the astrological publications though up till now no one has quite attained the notoriety of the clairvoyant who foretold the death of President Harding. Perhaps someone will compile a list of the major periodical pieces; they are beyond the scope of this piece but would be of inestimable value to all students and writers on the assassination.

The newspapers of that week, while in many cases containing straight wire-service accounts, do have the atmosphere of the immediacy of the event. A representative assassination collection would undoubtedly contain copies of a major paper for the day-to-day news coverage. A hundred years hence scarcity may add its special value to such papers as it has for those of the Lincoln assassination. There are, however, several issues which have their own special interest. The early issues of the Dallas and Fort Worth papers, being the first actually to report the shooting, are certainly desirable. The New York *Journal-American* issue with a headline of the shooting while elsewhere on the front page the President is reported delivering the speech in Dallas he never lived to make shows the over-eager journalism caught in its haste. Then *The Dallas Times Herald* issue with Robert Jackson's dramatic photo of Ruby shooting Oswald, the face of the latter contorted with the impact of the shot, covers one of the most remarkable events in journalist history. One more example would be *The Dallas Morning News* of November 22nd which contained the full-page black-bordered advertisement captioned "Welcome Mr. Kennedy" for which the right-wing group headed by Bernard Weissman paid \$1,485. Collectors will undoubtedly

identify others of equal interest.

Another medium which should not be overlooked is that of tape recordings or records. (Can one still call them phonograph records?) Several discs have been released in which witnesses describe what they saw. *The Controversy*, a Capitol recording, is such a release; this even includes "the hospital bedside recording of Jack Ruby." Another record, *Lee Harvey Oswald Speaks*, contains an interview with Oswald in August, 1963. Mark Lane has a record containing the sound track of the film he made and another disc in which he discusses a number of points from his book, *Rush To Judgment*.

For the true book collector, autographed or special association items are of great interest. As these are usually unique, each will stand on its own footing. I have seen a copy of the one volume report of the Warren Commission signed by all members of the Commission and understand that each member had a number of such autographed copies for distribution as he pleased. So much by way of background. As a start on the listing of such material, I have compiled the following bibliography of books and pamphlets on the case. Perhaps someone will prepare a similar list of periodicals containing major articles.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CONTENTS

The rule for inclusion in this list is simply this: any printed book, pamphlet, or other bound publication devoted entirely to some phase of the assassination of President Kennedy has been included. Generally newspapers, periodicals, or magazines having other material therein have been excluded. However, where a publication, such as a magazine, has devoted an entire issue to this subject, it has been included. No attempt has been made to include foreign language editions, some of which may have preceded U. S. publication. Where known, books published in England but not in the U. S. A. are included. Many hard cover books later appeared in paperback; I have not attempted to identify all such reprints. An exception has been made in the case of some microfilm records deemed of sufficient importance to be included.

FORMAT

The date of publication is given as shown on the title page of the earliest edition; dates in parentheses are dates of copyright. Unless otherwise mentioned, books are cloth bound in octavo size. When pages are unnumbered, the page count will appear in brackets. Paper bound books will be so described. The note of comment following the description is intended only to advise the reader of the nature of the book's content when this fact is not revealed by the title; no critical comment is intended.

Associated Press, Editors

The torch is passed . . .

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San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company (1964).
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Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1965.
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A collection of scholarly papers of the effect of the death on children.

BRIEFS

Ray Brown, author of *Madam Jumel*, *Catch the Brass Ring*, and *Who's Who in Filmdom*, has another unusual one off the press: *They Talk and Walk*. It deals with the old theory of our souls entering animals when we die. Cial Winthrop's grandfather thought so! Cial, a glamorous gal, is tempted by offers of fame and what goes with it; a bizarre book! (Magna Carta Press, Jamestown, Va. \$5.00 bound, \$1.75 paper.)

Gerald Coe Ltd. has published *Small Booksellers & Collectors Directory*, listing 487 British and foreign dealers and 246 private collectors with a sprinkling of libraries. The book, numbering about 180 pages and in soft covers, is planographed, but for a handbook it is a buy at \$2.50. (Wilbarston, Mkt. Harborough, Leics., England.)

The second *Jack London Newsletter*, just issued, contains contributions by Ray Gardner, Edward Allatt, Dale L. Walker, George Tweney, and the editor, Dr. Hensley C. Woodbridge (bibliography). Perhaps the most interesting paper is Allatt's "Jack London and Upton Sinclair." (\$2.50 a year for three numbers: Dr. Woodbridge, Southern Ill. University Library, Carbondale, Ill. 62901.)

Thomas A. Dunn (20-37 120th St., College Point, N. Y. 11356) has been publishing a newsletter, *The Pipe Smoker's Ephemeris*, the Spring-Summer issue contains no less than 17 pp. of pipe gossip, letters and news mimeographed on folio sheets. Being sent gratis to fellow pipe enthusiasts, it has a world-wide circulation with readers as far away as India. Mr. Dunn is a book collector with interests ranging from pipe literature to items on beards, books about books, and the Aliron-dacks.

Collectors interested in Hawthorne will welcome *The Centenary Hawthorne News-sheet*. No. 4 has just appeared. It is edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli and contains, in its 4 pp., a description of the differences in *The Marble Faun* between the first London edition, printed from the manuscript, and the first Boston edition printed from the English, partly from corrected and partly from uncorrected proofsheets. The *News-sheet* contains other Hawthorne material. It is available from the Ohio State University Press, Hitchcock Hall, 2070 Neil Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43210.

As in previous years our next issue (Vol. XIX, No. 1) will be out in September. The ABC office will be closed from July 15 to August 17.

From

TOM Mc DADE

Many thanks
for your
suggestions

Tom Mc Dade