

The Van Robinson Fine Press Book Collection

❧ A Century Of ❧  
**Fine Press Books**  
Gallery Guide



*"Reading Bear" woodcut by Michael McCurdy, 1984.*

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library is proud to host the exhibit  
*A Century of Fine Press Books* and wishes to acknowledge and thank  
The Museum of the Big Bend and Van Robinson.

# A Century Of Fine Press Books

This catalog was created for the opening reception and exhibit of “A Century of Fine Press” in celebration of the acquisition of 317 fine press books donated by Mr. Van Robinson of Fort Davis, Texas to the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library on the campus of Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. The exhibit and its catalog was designed by Valerie Howard, Collection Development Librarian. The opening reception was held at Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library on November 10, 2016. The exhibit ran from November 10, 2016 through January 30, 2017 with a special opening reception on November 10, 2016.



# The Art and Luxury of Fine Press Books

Fine Press Books are created more for pleasure than profit as exquisitely crafted and highly refined pieces. They are often created in limited editions and are typically the result of collaboration with the best craftsmen, designers, typographers, artists, and authors. Fine press books are meticulously fashioned and may contain: quality papers of vellum or cotton, type laid out character-by-character, illustrations carved in wood, spines bound by hand, and covers of leather with titles stamped in real gold foil. All of these elements come together to reflect the mood of the story unfolding in the book. They compel us to revel in the tactile experience of holding, touching, and reading the book as a fine art object.

Books from the Van Robinson Fine Press Collection are produced by the finest book designers and printers in the United States and Europe. A century of book-making is represented featuring titles from the English Kelmscott Press in 1893 to the Arion Press of San Francisco in 1995. Other renowned printers are represented including Ashendene, Arion, and Book Club of Texas. Many of these books are produced in limited editions, giving audiences a rare chance to see these volumes in person.

The collection is held at The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library on the first floor conference room 104. Visitors from the campus and community may view books from the collection by appointment during the regular operating hours of the Archives of the Big Bend. To request an appointment, contact the library at: 432-837-8123.

# A Note on the Collection by Donor Van Robinson

The collection started with fine press editions of the Greek classics. J. Frank Dobie in *Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest* says "I think it is more important that a dweller in the Southwest read *The Trial and Death of Socrates* than all the books extant on killings by Billy the Kid."

So I read Plato's *Crito*, *Apology* and *Phaedo*. I wanted the very best edition of each book, and it turned out that each fine press printed one Greek classic, such as the Ashendene Press *Thucydides*.

All this changed in 1979 when the Arion Press published their majestic *Moby Dick* with wood engravings by Barry Moser. I had to have the book, but the 250 copies were sold out before publication. Finally I got a copy for three times the initial price. Now it is twenty times publication price.

I continued buying fine press books and helped start the new Book Club of Texas in 1988. I took up bookbinding so that I could bind my favorite books in leather.



**“The fine press book collection has gone to Sul Ross State University, so that others can enjoy the books as much as I have for fifty years.”**

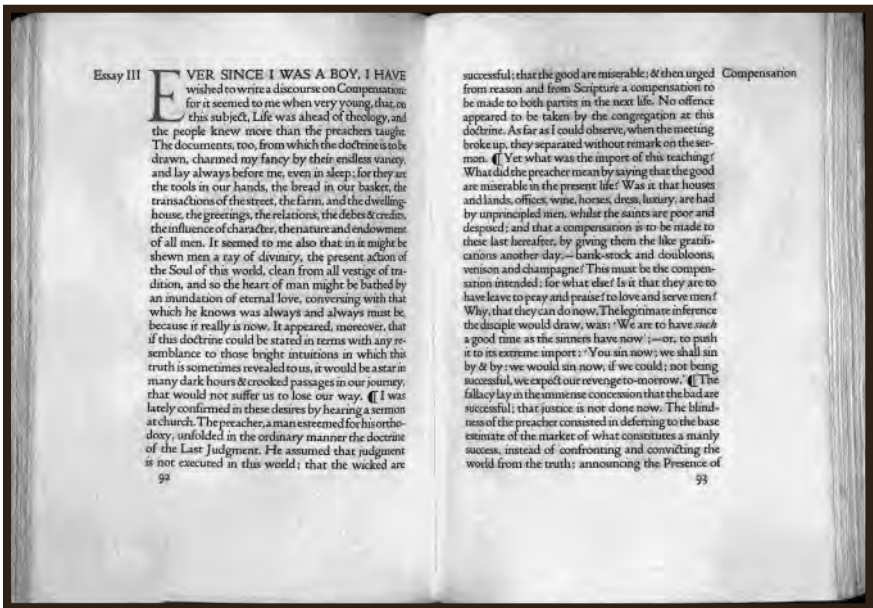
**Mr. Van Robinson**  
Photo courtesy of  
Michael Howard

# Selected Books from “A Century of Fine Press Books”

## Early English Presses

Early English presses of the late 19th to early 20th centuries evolved as part of The Arts and Crafts movement. A reaction to the industrialization of Great Britain, the movement embraced a return to craftsmanship and individual artistry. It was championed by William Morris (1834-1896), founder of the Kelmscott Press.<sup>1</sup> Books of this period were inspired by medieval manuscripts and often included architectural floral borders and calligraphic or gothic type with generous margins.

1. The Fine And Private Press Collection: <http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/fine-and-private-press>



Pages from *Essays* by Ralph Waldo Emerson, printed by Doves Press, 1906.

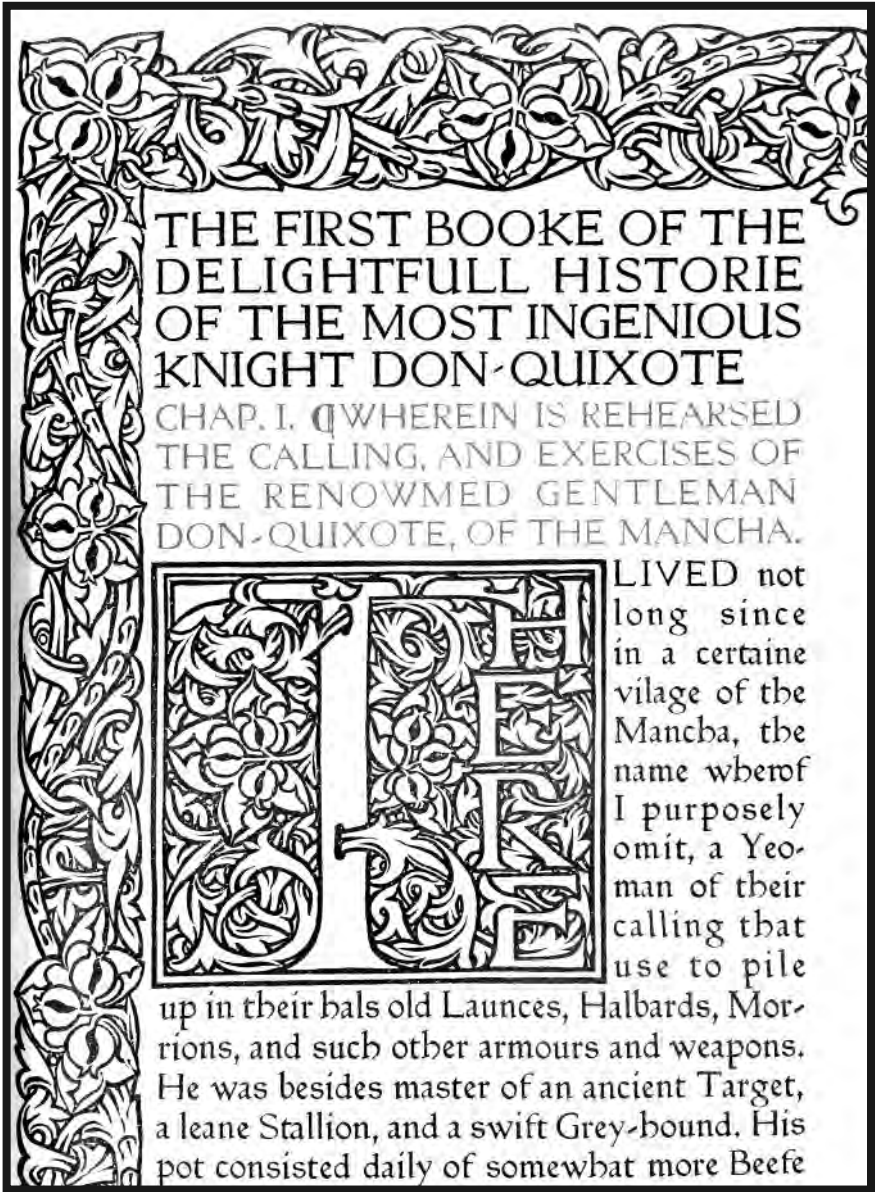
VENUS AND ADONIS.

**A**S THE  
SUNNE  
WITH PUR-  
PLE COL-  
OURD FACE,  
HAD TANE  
HIS LAST  
LEAVE OF  
THE WEEP-  
ING MORNE,  
ROSE-CHEEKT ADONIS HIED  
HIM TO THE CHACE,  
HUNTING HE LOV'D, BUT  
LOVE HE LAUGHT TO SCORNE:  
SICK THOUGHTED VENUS  
MAKES AMAINE UNTO HIM,  
AND LIKE A BOLD FAC'D  
SUTERGINNES TO WOO HIM.

THRISE FAIRER THEN MY  
SELFE, (THUS SHE BEGAN)  
THE FIELDS CHIEFE FLOWER,  
SWEET ABOVE COMPARE,  
STAINED TO ALL NIMPHS,  
MORE LOVELY THEN A MAN,  
MORE WHITE, AND RED,  
THEN DOVES, OR ROSES ARE:







THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE  
DELIGHTFULL HISTORIE  
OF THE MOST INGENIOUS  
KNIGHT DON-QUIXOTE

CHAP. I. WHEREIN IS REHEARSED  
THE CALLING, AND EXERCISES OF  
THE RENOWMED GENTLEMAN  
DON-QUIXOTE, OF THE MANCHA.

**L**IVED not long since in a certaine vilage of the Mancha, the name wherof I purposely omit, a Yeoman of their calling that use to pile up in their bals old Launces, Halbards, Morions, and such other armours and weapons. He was besides master of an ancient Target, a leane Stallion, and a swift Grey-bound. His pot consisted daily of somewhat more Beefe

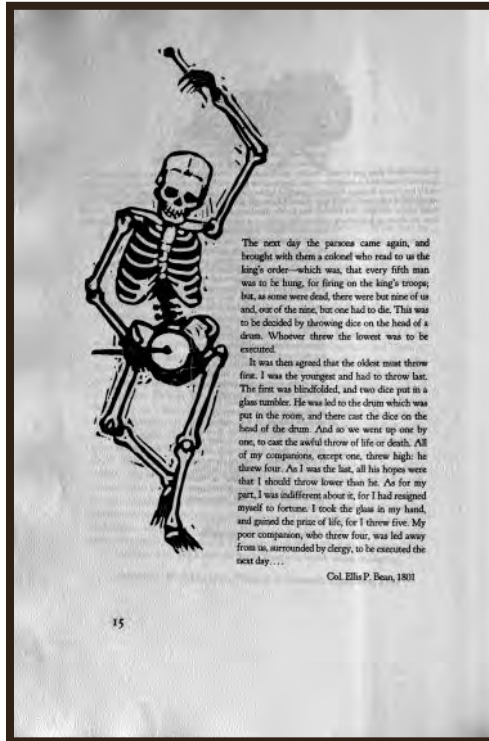
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Pictured left and above: Two illustrations from *The First Part Of The History Of The Valorous And Wittie Knight-Errant Don-Quixote Of The Mancha* by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, printed by Ashendene Press, 1927-1928.

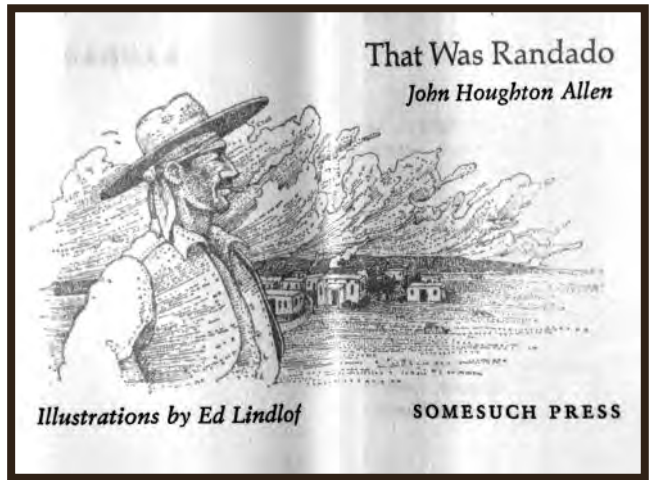
## Fine Press in Texas

Fine Press in Texas was influenced greatly by Carl Hertzog, instructor of book design and typography at what is today The University of Texas at El Paso. While there in 1948, he founded the college's print shop that would become known as the Texas Western Press.<sup>2</sup> You may see his influence in the fine typography, spacing and proportion of text, and in the high quality papers that come together to reflect the personality of the author's content.

2. Al, L. (1975). *Printing Arts In Texas*. Austin: R. Beacham.



Page from *This Bitterly Beautiful Land* compiled by Al Lowamn, printed by R. Beacham, 1972.



Inside cover of *That Was Randado* by John Houghton Allen, printed by Some such Press, 1978.



Page from *The Wonderful Country: A Novel* by Tom Lea, printed by Four-O-Imprint, 1995.



## A “Whale” of a Book

*Moby-Dick; or, The whale* went into production at Arion Press more than ten years after Robert Grabhorn and Andrew Hoyem began planning it. The book took over a year to print, from 1978-1979. In the 1990s the Grolier Club named it one of the 100 most beautiful books of the 20th century.

In order to render his boxwood engravings with authentic detail, Barry Moser spent hours doing research at whaling and maritime museums in New England and San Francisco. The text was set by hand in Goudy Modern, with initial letters printed in blue at the start of each of the 135 chapters in Leviathan Capitals, a special alphabet designed for the purpose by Charles Bigelow & Kris Holmes. The book is printed on Barcham Green's handmade paper, watermarked with the outline of a whale.



Pictured left and above: Two illustrations by Barry Moser from *Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale* by Herman Melville, printed by Arion Press, 1979.

# The Complete Listing of the Van Robinson Fine Press Collection

The following is a complete listing of books available from the Van Robinson Fine Press Collection. Patrons may search the library catalog at [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu) to find call numbers and further details about each book.

- Abernethy, F. E. (1967). *J. Frank Dobie*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn Co.
- Abt, J. (1982). *The Printer's Craft: An Exhibition Selected From The R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company Collection*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Library.
- Aeschylus, & Morshead, E. D. A. (1982). *The Oresteian Trilogy*. Greenbrae, CA: Allen Press.
- Aeschylus, Morshead, E. D. A., Ayrton, M., Warner, R., & Wilson, A. (1961). *The Oresteia*. New York, NY: A. Colish for the members of The Limited Editions Club.
- Aesop, Croxall, S., Scholderer, V., Rogers, B., Johnson, J. de M., & Rogers, B. (1933). *Aesop's Fables*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
- Ainsworth, L. (2001). *Randado: A Commemorative Tribute To Tom Lea*. (n.p.): Book Club of Texas.
- Alexander, P. (1958a). *The Comedies By William Shakespeare*. (n.p.): The Heritage Press.
- Alexander, P. (1958b). *The Histories Of William Shakespeare*. (n.p.): The Heritage Press.
- Alexander, P. (1958c). *The Tragedies Of William Shakespeare*. (n.p.): The Heritage Press.
- Allen, J. H., & Lindlof, E. (1978). *That Was Randado*. (n.p.): Somesuch Press.
- Apollonius, R., Coleridge, E. P., Hadas, M., Tassos, A., Eliopoulos, E., & Eliopoulos, N. (1957). *Argonautica, Or, The Quest Of Jason For The Golden Fleece: The Epic Poem First Set Down In The Ancient Greek Tongue*. (n.p.): Limited Editions Club.
- Apuleius, Lindsay, J., Goodman, P., Fass, J. S., & Cleland, T. M. (1932). *The Golden Ass*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
- Aristophanes, & Beardsley, A. (1927). *Aristophanes. Lysistrata*. (n.p.): Beardsley Press.
- Aristophanes, Fitts, D., Parry, M., & Clarke, B. (1959). *The Birds*.
- Aristophanes, Lindsay, J., & Lindsay, N. (1926). *Lysistrata*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.

- Aristotle, Kallen, H. M., Jowett, B., Butcher, S. H., Baskin, L., & Aristotle (1964). *Politics; & Poetics*. (n.p.): Stinehour Press for The Limited Editions Club.
- Ashendene, *Doves And Kelmscott Presses*. (1982). (n.p.): Heritage Book Shop.
- Bacon, F. (1902). *Essays*. (n.p.): G. Richards.
- Bacon, R., & Marcus, S. (1985). *The Four Stumbling Blocks To Truth*. (n.p.): Somesuch Press.
- Balzac, H. de, & Trent, W. P. [ca. 1900]. *The Works Of Honoré De Balzac*. (n.p.): F. DeFau.
- Barbour, B. H. (1984). *Tales Of The Mountain Men*. Santa Fe, NM: Press of the Palace of Governors.
- Barnstone, W. (1967). *Greek Lyric Poetry*. (n.p.): Indiana University Press.
- Beasley, E. G., McMurty, L., & Vliet, C. V. (1989). *My First Thirty Years*. (n.p.): Book Club of Texas.
- Billington, J. H. (1988). *Books And The World*. (n.p.): Library of Congress.
- Bliss, C. S., Morris, H., Atkyns, R., & Caslon, W. (1982). *A Pair On Printing: Atkyns' The Original And Growth Of Printing; William Caslon And The First English Type Specimen Book*. (n.p.): Bird and Bull Press.
- Blumenthal, J. (1989). *Bruce Rogers: A Life In Letters, 1870-1957*. (n.p.): W.T. Taylor.
- BR Today: A Selection Of His Books, With Comments*. (1982). (n.p.): Grolier Club.
- Bradbury, R., Gardner, M., & Mugnaini, J. A. (1974). *The Martian Chronicles*. (n.p.): Heritage Club.
- Bradbury, R., Mugnaini, J. A., & Austopchuk, C. (1982). *Fahrenheit 451*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
- Brettell, R. R., & Martin, R. L. (2005). *The Art Of The Book: A Centennial Tribute To Stanley Marcus, Bibliophile*. (n.p.): Meadows Museum and deGoyer Library.
- Byron, G. G. B., & McConnell, F. D. (1978). *Byron's Poetry: Authoritative Texts, Letters And Journals, Criticism, Images Of Byron*. (n.p.): Norton.
- Carpenter, E. H., & Dahlstrom, G. E. (1947). *Some Libraries We Have Not Visited: A Paper Read At The Rounce & Coffin Club, August 26, 1947*. (n.p.): Ampersand Press.
- Cervantes Saavedra, M. de, Clark, J. W., Shore, T. T., Doré, G., & Jarvis, C. [ca. 1864]. *The History Of Don Quixote*. (n.p.): Cassell, Petter, and Galpin.
- Cervantes Saavedra, M. de, Kelly, W. K., & Cervantes Saavedra, M. de (1855). *The Exemplary Novels Of Miguel De Cervantes Saavedra To Which Are Added El Buscapié, Or The Serpent; And La Tia Fingida, Or The Pretended Aunt*. (n.p.): H.G. Bohn.
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- Chambers, D., Cox, M., Franklin, C., & Tucker, A. (1991). *Gogmagog: Morris Cox & The Gogmagog Press*. (1982). (n.p.): Private Libraries Association.
- Chekhov, A. P., Szalay, L., & Chekhov, A. P. (1966). *Two Plays Of Anton Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard [And] Three Sisters*. (n.p.): Heritage Press.
- Chew, B., & Granniss, R. S. (1926). *Essays & Verses About Books*. (n.p.).
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- Concerning Cats, Two Tales By Mark Twain. With An Introduction By Frederick Anderson*. (1959). San Francisco, CA: The Book Club of California.
- Craig, E. G., & Franklin, C. (1982). *Gordon Craig's Paris Diary, 1932-1933*. (n.p.): Bird and Bull Press.
- Crane, H., Cowley, M., Benson, R., Stinehour, S., Bixler, M., & Bixler, W. (1981). *The Bridge: A Poem*. (n.p.).
- Crane, S., & Descombes, R. (1976). *The Red Badge Of Courage: An Episode Of The American Civil War*. (n.p.): The Franklin Library.
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- Defoe, D., Wilson, E. A., Grabhorn, E. E., & Ford, F. M. (1930). *The Life And Strange Surprising Adventures Of Robinson Crusoe Of York, Mariner*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
- DeGolyer, E., & Hertzog, C. (1947). *The Antiquity Of The Oil Industry: With Copious Notes And References By The Author*. (n.p.): Peripatetic Press.
- DePol, J. (1985). *A Commonplace Book: Profound & Profane Thoughts & Observations ...* (n.p.): Pickering Press.
- Dickens, C. (1965). *The Old Curiosity Shop*. (n.p.): Oxford University Press.
- Dickens, C. (n.d.). *Bleak House*. (n.p.): Chapman and Hall.
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- Emerson, R. W. [ca. 1903]. *English Traits And Representative Men*. (n.p.): H. Frowde.
- Emerson, R. W. (1906). *Essays By Ralph Waldo Emerson*. (n.p.): Doves Press.
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- Euripides, Vellacott, P., & Ayrton, M. (1967). *Medea; Hippolytus; The Bacchae*. London: Curwen Press for the Limited Editions Club.
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- Evelyn, J. (1985). *Acetaria: A Discourse Of Sallets*. Dallas, TX: Still Point Press.
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- Gill, E., Skelton, C., & Renton, M. (1986). *The Engraved Bookplates Of Eric Gill, 1908-1940.* (n.p): Book Club of California.
- Goethe, J. W. von, Raphael, A., Clarke, R., Schreiber, C. F., Van Doren, M., & Duggins, W. A. (1932). *Faust: A Tragedy: The First Part.* (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
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- Graves, J., & DePol, J. (1991). *Self-Portrait With Birds: Some Semi-Ornithological Recollections.* (n.p.): Chama Press.
- Hadas, M. (1965). *Imperial Rome.* (n.p.): Time, Inc.
- Hallenbeck, C., & Marco, da N. (1987). *The Journey Of Fray Marcos De Niza.* (n.p.): Southern Methodist University Press.
- Hammett, D., & Hoyem, A. (1983). *The Maltese Falcon.*(n.p.).
- Harrison, J. E., & Mirrlees, H. (1926). *The Book Of The Bear, Being Twenty-One Tales Newly Translated From The Russian.*(n.p.).
- Harrop, D. A. (1980). *A History Of The Gregynog Press.* (n.p.): Arion Press.
- Harrop, D. A. (1986). *Sir Emery Walker, 1851-1933.* (n.p.): Nine Elms Press.
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- Hazlitt, W., & Hazlitt, W. (1906). *Winterslow: Essays And Characters Written There.* (n.p.): H. Frowde.

- Hemingway, E. (1977). *The Sun Also Rises*. (n.p.): Franklin Library.
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- Herodotus (1958). *The Histories Of Herodotus Of Halicarnassus*. (n.p.): Joh. Enschedé en Zonen for The Limited Editions Club.
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- Homer, & Chapman, G. [1904]. *The Odysseys Of Homer: Together With The Shorter Poems*. (n.p.): G. Newnes.
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- Huxley, A., & McAfee, M. (1974). *Brave New World*. (n.p.): The Limited Editions Club.
- Ingram, D., DeGolyer, E., & Hertzog, C. (1947). *Across Aboriginal America: The Journey Of Three Englishmen Across Texas In 1568*. (n.p.): Peripatetic Press.
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