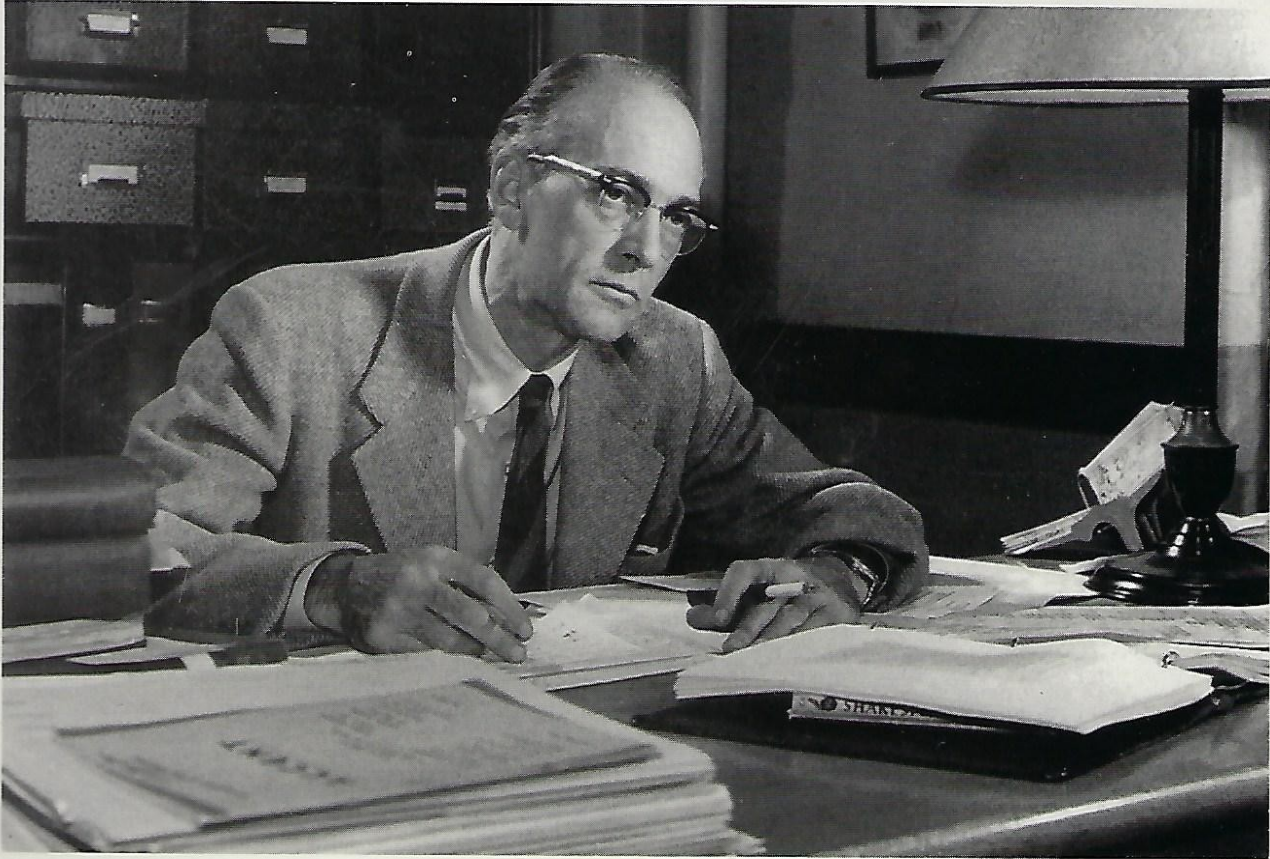


Shakespeare on the American Stage

From Booth and Barrett to Sothorn and Marlowe



Charles H. Shattuck



About the Author

Charles H. Shattuck, now Professor Emeritus of the University of Illinois, has earned all his degrees and spent most of his teaching years at that institution. A member of the department of English with special interest in dramatic literature, for some twenty years he was "on loan" part-time to the University Theatre, where he annually staged a Shakespeare production. Each year he would also direct a significant play from the modern repertory. In those years, too, he served as coeditor of *Accent, A Quarterly of New Literature*.

His first book, *Bulwer and Macready, A Chronicle of the Early Victorian Theatre* (1958), records the most successful of William Charles Macready's ceaseless efforts to persuade distinguished writers to join him in creating a "modern renaissance" of legitimate drama. Shattuck's discovery of basic records of Macready's Shakespeare stagings led to book-length studies, including facsimiles of the promptbooks, of two of Macready's finest works—*King John* (1962) and *As You Like It* (1963).

Shattuck's other books include *The Shakespeare Promptbooks, A Descriptive Catalogue* (1965); *The Hamlet of Edwin Booth* (1969), granted the first George Freedley Memorial Award; *Accent, An Anthology, 1940–1960* (1974), coedited with Daniel Curley and George Scouffas; *The Kemble Promptbook* (1975); and the first volume of *Shakespeare on the American Stage* (1976), also granted a share in the George Freedley Award. He has received grants from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, and the University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study.

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VOLUME 2

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Preface

THIS VOLUME is the inevitable sequel to *Shakespeare on the American Stage: from the Hallams to Edwin Booth* (Folger Books, 1976). During the summer of 1974 Dr. O. B. Hardison, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, proposed that in anticipation of the nation's Bicentenary I prepare a history of Shakespeare's two hundred years on the American stage. It was easy to accept this assignment, impossible to fulfill it in the time available. The subject proved so rich that I could cover only the first of two centuries, and I could do even that much only by omitting quantities of detail and focusing a set of essays around major figures and events confined, for the most part, to the eastern seaboard.

As I attempt now to advance the history, the matter thickens. In this volume I cover a mere half-century, down to the end of World War I. As our nation expanded, its theatres multiplied by the hundreds, its performers by thousands, and theatre-goers, from coast to coast, by many hundreds of thousands. Again I must omit much, and only occasionally can I remind readers that in the generation before cinema usurped public attention, live theatre (and Shakespeare) was everywhere.

What I find especially rewarding during this period is the vast growth of theatrical criticism. A city like Boston or Philadelphia would be served by well over a dozen daily or weekly journals, each employing from one or two to a battery of theatre reporters and critics. From the city of New York there emanated more than three dozen journals—some like the *Dramatic Mirror* devoted exclusively to theatre, but all covering theatre with professional and generally expert writers.

Theatre meant so much to the public then that editors allowed their critics all the space they needed to say what must be said. Reviews were detailed and literate, and they represented every shade of opinion, from the irredeemable (sometimes glowing, sometimes peevish, even vituperative) Victorianism of William Winter (known then as the "Dean of Critics")

to the rowdy muscularity of A. C. Wheeler (pseudonym "Nym Crinkle"), the most eloquent spokesman of the cigar-and-whiskey school of theatrical evaluators; from the solid scholarship of John Ranken Towse, most judicious of the firm-set conservatives, to such willing promoters of modernism as Norman Hapgood, James Huneker, and Walter Prichard Eaton.

Boston was blest with the measured wisdom of Henry Austin Clapp of the *Advertiser*, often declared to be the fairest, soundest, best-informed theatre critic of his time; Edward Fuller and Professor Charles Copeland of the *Post*; and the grand constellation of writers who gathered at the *Transcript*—Edwin Edgett, Evelyn Sutherland, others anonymous, later Kenneth Macgowan and Hiram Moderwell, culminating in the distinguished career of Henry Taylor Parker. Famous across the country were such critics as L. Clarke Davis of Philadelphia, Robinson Locke of Toledo, George Goodale of Detroit, Elwyn Barron and James O'Donnell Bennett and Percy Hammond and W. L. Hubbard of Chicago, Oliver Saylor of Indianapolis, and Peter Robinson of San Francisco.

At their best these professional witnesses bring us more vivid images of—and warmer feelings for—Shakespearean performers at their work than does perhaps any body of American critics before or since. In some cases their testimony sharply qualifies—elevates or diminishes—artistic reputations that have seemed, from constant repetition, immutably fixed. Occasionally, when these critics disagree, their clashes of opinion may prove more entertaining and illuminating than the subjects they are quarreling about. I have offered generous samples of their writing, and only wish there were time and space to do thorough justice to their insights, their prejudices and follies, their wisdoms. A massive study needs to be made of the state of theatrical criticism as the nineteenth-century theatre was entering its autumnal flowering, soon to wither and make way for the the-

atre that we think of as "modern."

For a decade or so after the Great War our attention in America was diverted from Shakespeare to the products of our own much-heralded "dramatic renaissance"—the emergence of Rice, Odets, O'Neill, and their like. Shakespeare production—detached from tradition, fitting awkwardly into the new "naturalism" of acting, and even awkwardly (to some it seemed) into scenery styled by the "New Stagecraft"—became occasional, tentative, sporadic. Probably not until our re-education from the mother-country by Margaret Webster and Maurice Evans in the 1930s did we find our way back to Shakespeare-as-he-ought-to-be.

My indebtedness to dozens of critics, biographers, and historians is acknowledged piecemeal in footnotes throughout the essays. But I must record special gratitude to a number of young scholars working in this period who have most generously made available to me, for information and ideas, their new and for the most part unpublished findings. These include Tori Haring-Smith (on modern productions of the *Shrew*), James R. Miller (on Lawrence Barrett), Tice L. Miller (on the critic Towse), John A. Mills (on Fechter and other modern Hamlets), Alex Pinkston (on Mansfield), Joan Saliskas (on Julia Marlowe), John Chase Soliday (on the Booth-Barrett tours), Gary Williams (on modern productions of the *Dream*), and Thomas Key Wright (on the critic "Nym Crinkle"). I have gained much, too, from conversation or correspondence with, among others, Doris Adler, Dennis Bartholomeusz, James Ellis, Attilio Favorini, Alan Hughes, Edward Moore, John Ripley, Denis Salter, and Daniel Watermeier.

To Jeanne Newlin and Martha Mahard of the Harvard Theatre Collection, to George Nash, former director of the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection, to the staff of the Theatre Collection of the New York Public Library, to the Research Board of the University of Illinois, I am much indebted for aid in gathering material for this study. Jean Miller, keeper of the Art

Collection of the Folger Shakespeare Library has been ingenious and tireless in plumbing the archives for illustrations. Nora Tracy, editorial assistant for the *Shakespeare Quarterly*, and Lena Cowen Orlin, now Executive Director of the Folger Institute and Associate Director of Academic Programs at the Folger, have served as traffic managers on this project, keeping countless problems of manuscript handling, placing of illustrations, collecting permissions, etc. steadily on track. The Society of Authors, on behalf of the Bernard Shaw Estate, has granted permission for quotation of passages from the critical writings of Bernard Shaw.

Much of the photographing of materials located in Urbana was done by my friend and neighbor, the late Carolyn Pape (Mrs. Mark Netter), whose sudden death interrupted her exactly when she was happiest in her work on the project. I am grateful to my colleague, John Friedman, for carrying the photography to completion. Marlyn Ehlers and Sherri George, both of the secretarial staff of the University of Illinois Department of English, have typed my crude manuscript into readable copy. I am indebted to Katharine Turok, managing editor of Associated University Presses, and to her staff, for their extraordinarily judicious and thorough attention to matters of style as well as technical preparation of the manuscript for the printer.

I owe most to Dr. John Andrews, formerly the editor of Folger Books, and Director of Academic Programs at the Folger, for his firm insistence that this history be carried forward, and for his extraordinary patience over the years while my essays and revised essays drifted slowly to his desk. My wife Susan, too, who has been my best helper and critic, has been more than humanly forgiving for the time I have spent in finishing this work, and is even willing to contemplate my engagement on its sequel. American Shakespeare of the twentieth century (which in fact got under way in the 1890s) must be attended to next.



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August 30, 1988

Dr. Charles ~~W.~~ Shattuck
707 West Pennsylvania
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Dear Charles:

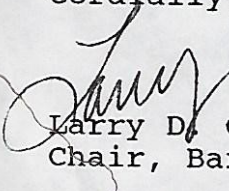
I am extremely pleased to tell you that you have been selected as the 1988 recipient of the *Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History for the second volume of your Shakespeare on the American Stage*. At this point in the letter I would ordinarily talk a little about the history of this award, but to do so for you would be like preaching to the saved. Suffice it to say that your work will add luster to the Award in Professor Hewitt's name and to the co-sponsors, the University of Illinois and the American Society for Theatre Research.

The \$500 award will be presented during the annual meeting of the American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) in Columbus, Ohio, November 10-12, 1988. At this time, I am unable to give you the precise date, time, and place of the presentation, but if it follows the past pattern, it will be on Saturday, November 12, at the Conference luncheon. As always, we hope that you will be able to be present in person to receive your much deserved recognition.

On behalf of the Barnard Hewitt Award Committee, I share with you our pleasure in notifying you of your selection and congratulate you for such a splendid piece of research and writing. I am certain that Professor Hewitt would be pleased to know that the Award has at last come home.

I hope this letter finds you in good health, and that you will be able to be in Columbus in November. With best regards I remain,

Cordially,


Larry D. Clark, Interim Dean
Chair, Barnard Hewitt Award Selection Committee

LDC:mna

File with the others I've owned you.

Chuck

September 16, 1987

Dear John —

This is for your coffee table.
And with it my warmest
thanks for making me do these
things. And for the uncountable
ways you have helped me in
the doing. And for all the years
past and hereafter of our friend-
ship. Yes, Chuck