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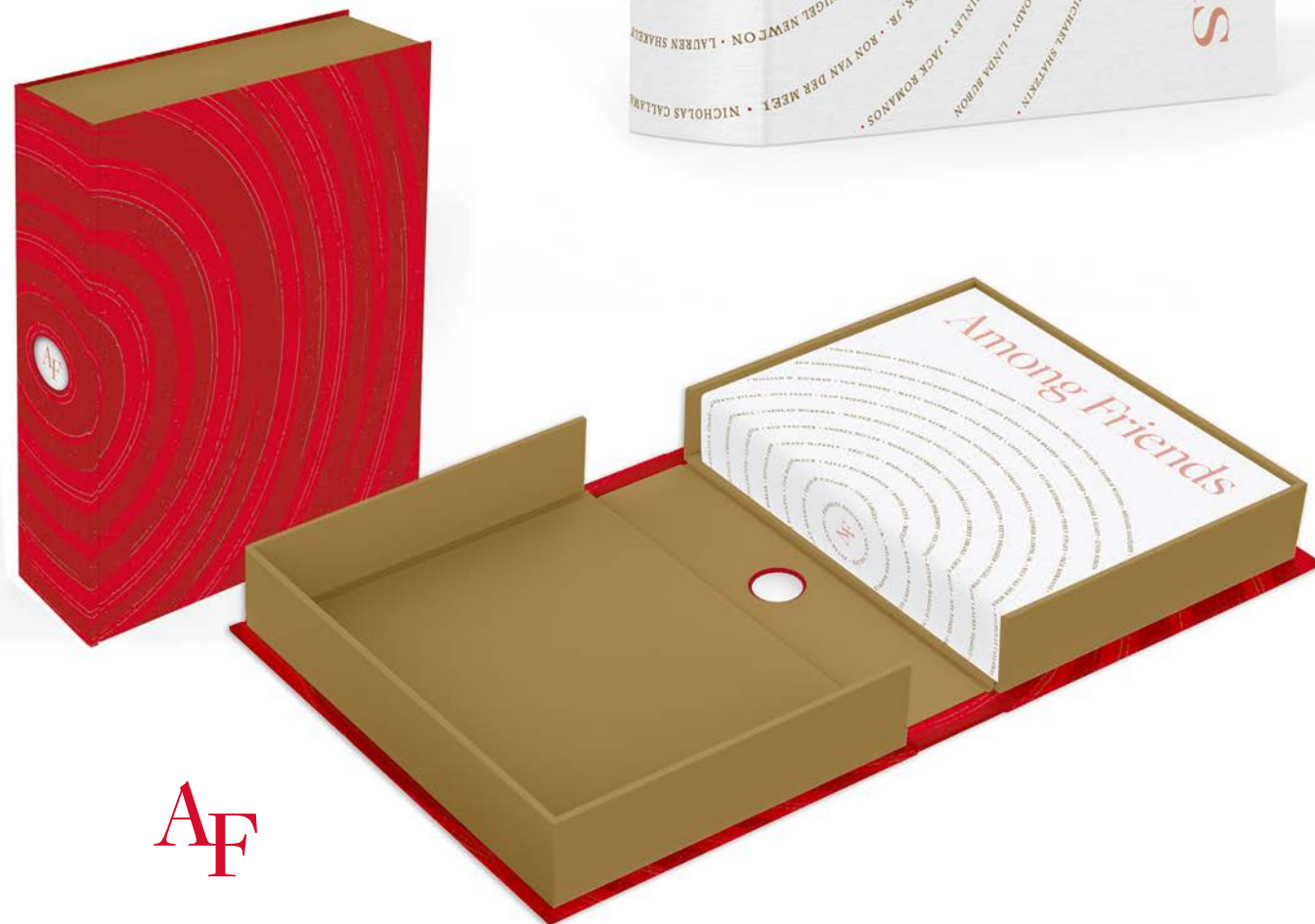
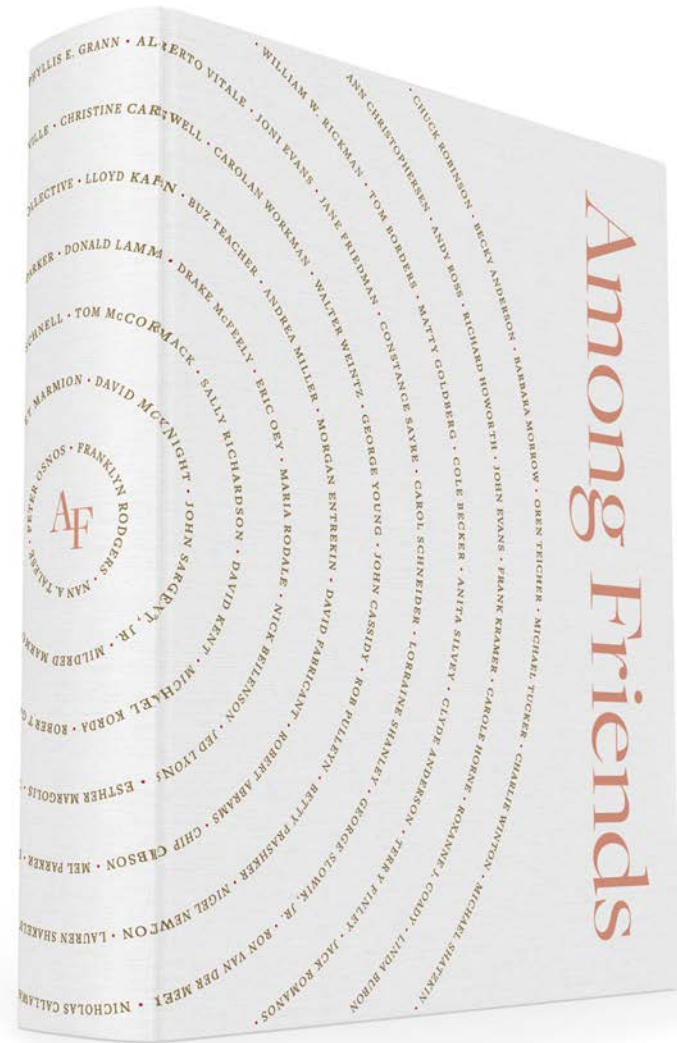
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Among Friends

An Illustrated Oral History
of American Book Publishing
& Bookselling in the 20th Century

Edited by Buz Teacher & Janet Bukovinsky Teacher

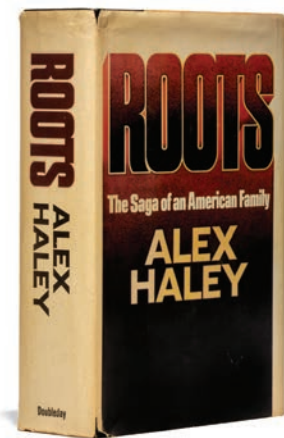
TWO TREES PRESS
NEW HOPE, PENNSYLVANIA

Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world — John Muir

Among Friends: An Illustrated Oral History of American Book Publishing & Bookselling in the 20th Century

It may be the sensual aspect of books that enables their survival.

Daniel Halpern
ECCO PRESS



Book publishing emerged from a small cluster of eponymous companies founded by rich men who didn't want to work on Wall Street to become a major purveyor of information and entertainment.

Betty Prashker
DOUBLEDAY

In 1984, I became president and publisher of Charles Scribner's Sons: the first female and first Jew in the company's long history to hold that position.

Mildred Marmor
S&S • RANDOM HOUSE

My fellow employees were whack jobs, dipsomaniacs, lexicographers, transvestites, poets, drug peddlers, folk singers, hairdressers and honest to God entrepreneurs who all seemed happy to be there.

Chip Gibson
OUTLET BOOK COMPANY

The act of opening a bookstore is fueled by a sense of hope.

Roxanne J. Coady
RJ JULIA BOOKS

I rushed the stage and told Ram Dass I wanted to publish his book. He didn't want to appear to profit from his teachings. "Don't worry," I said. "Most authors don't make money."

Bruce Harris
CROWN PUBLISHING GROUP



I was awakened by police who told me that Cody's had been firebombed. I realized bookselling was a dangerous vocation because ideas are powerful weapons.

Andy Ross
CODY'S BOOKS



The race for bookstore supremacy between B. Dalton and Walden soon came down to a struggle over real estate.

Matty Goldberg
B. DALTON

In 1970 my brother Louis and I considered computerizing *The Daily Racing Form* to make an easy living playing the horses. Instead we opened a small used bookstore.

Tom Borders
BORDERS BOOK SHOP

Authors did not make a living before me. The old guard did not like me. I used the word "profit" publicly.

Dick Snyder
SIMON & SCHUSTER

We editors of the '70s hated the businessmen with their projections and sales conferences and long-range planning, as if authors manufactured their books like so many washing machines.

Joni Evans
SIMON & SCHUSTER

I learned about publishing from Oscar Dystel at Bantam Books. He was the king of paperbacks, a true pioneer, and people would go to all sorts of extremes for him.

Alberto Vitale
RANDOM HOUSE



I never had any intention of going into publishing. It was a happy accident, and the luckiest thing that happened to me.

Phyllis Grann
DOUBLEDAY

After graduating from NYU, I walked into the Random House personnel department and said that I wanted to be a publisher. It may have been arrogant, but I meant it.

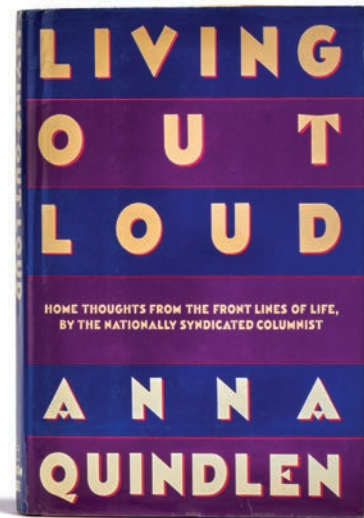
Jane Friedman
RANDOM HOUSE

On an author tour, Ray Bradbury was delighted to hear that our store was named after characters in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Steven Bercu
BOOKPEOPLE

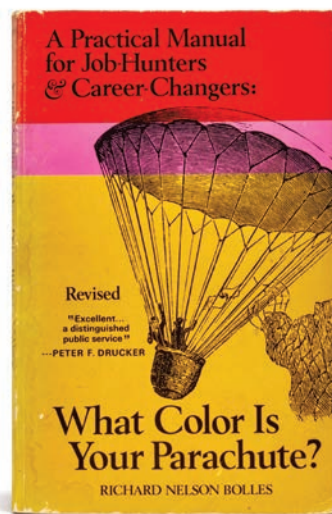
The mass-market business was exploding. “Romance Centers” were installed in all 700 stores as publishers rushed to fill what seemed to be an insatiable demand.

David Cully
WALDEN BOOKS



We were part of a small group of independent publishers selling the *Silver Palate Cookbook*, *Gray's Anatomy* and books about geodesic domes—a bit daring for what had been a very conservative industry.

George Young
TEN SPEED PRESS



Women handled projects about gardening, cooking, decorating and childcare. Bob Gottlieb was emperor and editor in chief, and we all worshipped him.

Constance Sayre
SIMON & SCHUSTER

Paperback consumers wouldn't have stepped into a carriage trade bookstore. For this new reader, demand was far greater than supply.

Jack Romanos
SIMON & SCHUSTER

Lemuria's friendship with Knopf grew as Sonny Mehta took an interest in our work and included Mississippi on many of his authors' tour schedules.

John Evans
LEMURIA BOOK STORE

I realized that a large college town could support a million-dollar bookstore. I scratched together cash, packed my dogs in the car and found a lawyer to get incorporated.

Gary Hoover
BOOKSTOP



The company grew and grew. You made money, the clubs were happy, it was all so good. Then it became apparent that we needed to start a paperback line.

Sally Richardson
DOUBLEDAY • ST. MARTIN'S PRESS

Stephen King pulled up on his motorcycle to a parking lot full of excited fans on his cross-country tour of independent bookstores.

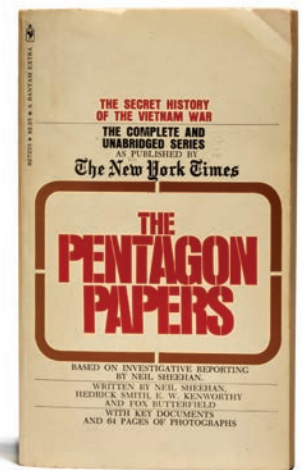
Barbara Morrow
NORTHSHIRE BOOKSTORE

The force behind B. Dalton's success was Kay Sexton, who was not expendable; one cannot overestimate her importance.

Cole Becker
B. DALTON

Publishing executives in button-down shirts and khakis clicked bottles of beer and talked shop while Madonna's entourage of young men in leather danced at her book launch party.

Mel Parker
BERKLEY PUBLISHING GROUP
WARNER BOOKS



Robert Maxwell won the bidding and renamed the company Maxwell Macmillan. He built a luxury apartment, with gold bathroom fixtures, on the top floor.

John Sargent, Jr.
DOUBLEDAY
MACMILLAN PUBLISHING

Pioneered by Bantam, the “instant book” dramatically illustrates how mass market paperbacks impacted the culture and the publishing industry in the 20th century.

Esther Margolis
BANTAM BOOKS
NEWMARKET PRESS

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All in the Family

How a wacky, free-form company became part of Random House

•
CHIP GIBSON

OUTLET BOOK COMPANY • CROWN PUBLISHING GROUP

Nat Wartels, Outlet Books' chairman and owner, was a brilliant businessman whose famously insane office was clearly the workspace of a madman.

I graduated from college in 1981 with a BA in English literature and no idea of what I might do for a living. After a few ragged false starts I parked myself in the local suburban library and copied out the addresses of one hundred book publishing companies from an enormous and slightly outdated copy of the Literary Market Place (once known universally as the “LMP,” and now barely known at all). I composed a version of the expected, safely stilted cover letter describing my brand-new lifelong dream of a career in the book trade, attached smudgy Xeroxes of my peculiar and underwhelming resume (“A smattering of Italian”), mailed off the hundred packages and waited.

Many weeks passed and I was on the verge of surrendering to the apparent English major inevitability of law school applications when I received a note from David Shumaker at something called the Outlet Book Company requesting that I come in for a “sit down.” So I suited up and subways down from the upper Upper West Side to One Park Avenue for my first and, effectively, last job interview in book publishing.

At this point in the saga of an early career there is often inserted a self-consciously abashed parenthetical insight gleaned well after the fact, something like: “Years later it was revealed to me that I had been hired despite my ridiculously inadequate resume and lack of pertinent work experience.” But my soon-to-be boss “Dirty Dave” informed me the moment I sat down that I was hired, and the reason I was hired was precisely because of my unintentionally hilarious resume, which had been copied and posted throughout the company coffee stations and lavatories and was such a side-splitting hit that David and his boss J.P. Leventhal decided it would be good for the general morale to have “Chip” around.

Though confused by my instant notoriety (and a little humiliated) I was indeed hired on the spot and so started as the assistant to Dirty Dave the Inventory Manager of the Outlet Book Company the following week. My fellow employees at Outlet were a heady and exotic mix of whack jobs, dipsomaniacs, lexicographers, transvestites, poets, drug peddlers, folk singers, hairdressers, and honest to God entrepreneurs. It seemed a pretty odd stew, but what did I know, this was my first office job. And there was a buzz about the place. Folks, despite their myriad peculiarities, seemed truly happy to be there.

I have learned that a company's culture is crafted at the top, both by the business goals and objectives passed down from the executives and, even more profoundly, by the character of the person in charge. My final boss at Random House was a harddriven, impossibly energetic, can-do optimist; a globetrotting 38-year-old polyglot from

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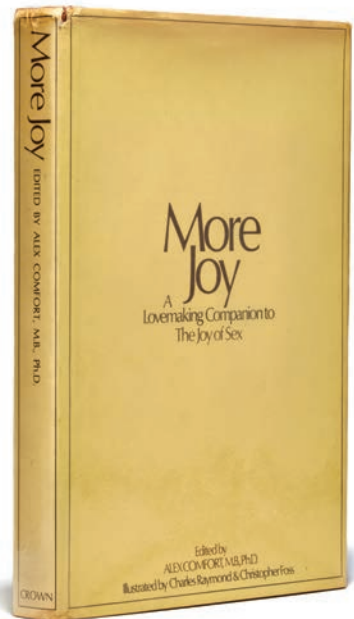
Westphalia with a 24/7 commitment to the international media enterprise that was the Bertelsmann-owned Random House. Gradually but ineluctably, Random House rearranged itself to reflect his workaholic pace and hard-charging pursuit of corporate excellence and 18 percent EBITA. The whack jobs and dipsos were artfully herded to the periphery, and then were mostly disappeared. (I am by no means singling out Bertelsmann/Random House, which now includes, amazingly, Viking Penguin. Rightsizing the kooks, characters and oddballs off the premises seems to be the general trend in corporately owned book publishing.)

What a contrast between the perfectly accoutered weekend triathlete who runs Penguin Random today and Nat Wartels, the chairman and owner of Outlet in 1982. There he is, in the photo above, in all of his magisterial and slovenly glory.

Nat's famously insane office had for so long been an image seared into my consciousness that it became hard to see it anew, with fresh eyes. However, it's been a few years and I am doing so now.

It is obviously the workspace of a madman. But I know better. Nat was in fact a brilliant businessman. His tripartite, cross-nurturing publishing and distribution enterprise had made him, among other things, the wealthiest man in book publishing according to *Forbes* magazine circa 1980. (Crown Publishers was a commercial trade book publisher and a reliable source for Outlet, which was an enormous remainder and promotional—or “sale”—book publisher. Both Crown and Outlet fed Publisher's Central Bureau, a gigantic and gigantically successful direct mail book operation that

Entrepreneurial Independents



Smart Young Things

Back when everyone did a little bit of everything

•
CONSTANCE SAYRE

SIMON & SCHUSTER



First-timer Constance Sayre, Holt

In 1958, nearly a decade before *Valley of the Dolls*, Simon & Schuster published *The Best of Everything*, a novel by Rona Jaffe about five young women who worked at a New York publishing house. Jaffe wrote it while she was an assistant editor at Fawcett Publications. The content was shocking for the time as it included affairs with married men, sexual harassment (which didn't have a name back then) and other topics not discussed in mixed company. But it did make publishing seem like an exciting place to work.

I was raised in England and because my father was a Pan Am pilot I grew up traveling everywhere. Somehow, I was hired at Simon & Schuster in 1966 following my graduation from Barnard. I actually got the job via *The New York Times* employment section. I saw a classified ad for an entry-level permissions and copyright person, took a typing test and with a made-up resume I was hired by Patricia White.

Founded in 1925 with one list and no separate imprints, S&S was a place of legends like Franz Werfel (*The Song of Bernadette*), Peter Freuchen (*Adventures in the Arctic*), William Shirer (*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*), Al Capp (Li'l Abner) and I could go on. At the office I heard so many stories: how Simon & Schuster aided in the 1933 escape from Germany of Felix Salten, the Austrian author of *Bambi* and other classic children's titles; how *Peyton Place* author Grace Metalious, who dressed like a lumberjack, was urged by Kitty Messner at S&S to buy something more suitable for her author tour and showed up on the *Today* show wearing a lavender nightgown; how the file for an author known only as "Anonymous" was lost forever when his editor—the only person who knew his name—quit.

Reporting to Millie Marmur, I held the new position of copyright and permissions editor: the lowest of the low, which also meant replacing everyone at their desks when they were out. I loved every minute of it and can never thank Pat White—who went on to co-found Rogers, Coleridge and White in London—enough for hiring me, apparently because I didn't want to be an editor. It was a great way to learn the business from the bottom up. One of my tasks was rejecting unsolicited manuscripts. In those days everyone read or at least paid lip service to the slush pile. At S&S, regardless of your entry-level job description, you were expected to deal with 10 to 12 manuscripts a week, logging them in, "reading" them, writing a polite rejection letter and returning the ill-fated oeuvre in its own stamped, self-addressed envelope. Another of my tasks was to periodically clean out the contract files to make room for new contracts. I quickly learned that those files were not treasured things. Along with a few other serfs, I had to visit what we called "The Submarine" in the basement of 630 Fifth Avenue, where "making room" meant throwing old contracts in the trash.

Among Friends

The company was very disorganized, but it was ahead of its time in that many women were already in senior positions and heads of departments, although men dominated editorial, financial and administration. Women handled projects about gardening, cooking, decorating and childcare. The production department was headed by Helen Barrow. Bob Gottlieb was emperor and editor in chief, and we all worshipped him. My salary was \$85 a week. I was moving in with a chap and sort of thought I'd get married, but I was promoted rapidly and enjoyed working. In theory it was boring to learn about copyrights and track down authors, but in practice it definitely was not.

One of my first jobs—okay, a bit tedious—was to apply for copyright transfers. I was told on my first day that the only reason to go to the 27th floor (Pocket Books, which had been recently been acquired by S&S) from the 28th (S&S) was to visit the mailroom. All the original founders of S&S were gone—see Bob Gottlieb's *Avid Reader*—but lurking at Pocket Books were many of the company's elders: Herb Alexander, Doc Lewis and others whose names I do not recall. And the *capo di tutti capi* was Leon Shimkin.

In those days, renewing copyrights involved major research to find the author or their heirs or estates in order to get official permission in the form of a signature to renew on their behalf. In a nursing home I found an aging sister of Henry Bellamann, author of the 1940 *Kings Row* (the movie starred Ronald Reagan—"Where's the rest of me?") after months of digging, only to have the rights immediately reverted by the agent, as was his right, but he let the publisher do the work of keeping the copyright valid.

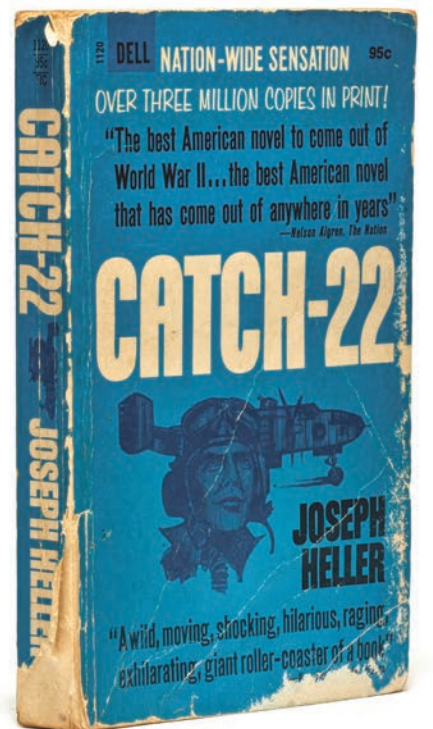
Another part of my job was to deal with unhappy agents and authors, including Sid (S.J.) Perelman, who of course could never find his books in stores, and Joseph Heller in the days when *Catch-22* was raking in the royalties and he always needed an advance from the Dell paperback edition. I had to clear every permission request—usually for high school literature textbooks—with Heller's wondrous agent Candida Donadio. No matter what they offered as a fee, she would instruct me to double or triple it. Candida was the premier agent of her time; in the 1960s she also represented Philip Roth and Thomas Pynchon.

I left S&S because I was offered a job by Andre Deutsch, the Hungarian-born British publisher, with whom I had been negotiating contracts. All of my family was in England, so I went off for a year. I changed jobs a lot. It was the only way to increase my salary, and I learned so much. I once made a mistake and went to work for a horrendous man who told me to wait to call on people until the week I had PMS when my tits were bigger. That was at Quadrangle Books, the Chicago nonfiction publisher, which had become a subsidiary of The New York Times Company. They had lots of really good people, in particular Carol Southern who went on to do a splendid job at Crown with her own imprint and very serious nonfiction. I also worked at Henry Holt, a company founded in 1866, and at Viking, where I was offered a job by Irv Goodman.

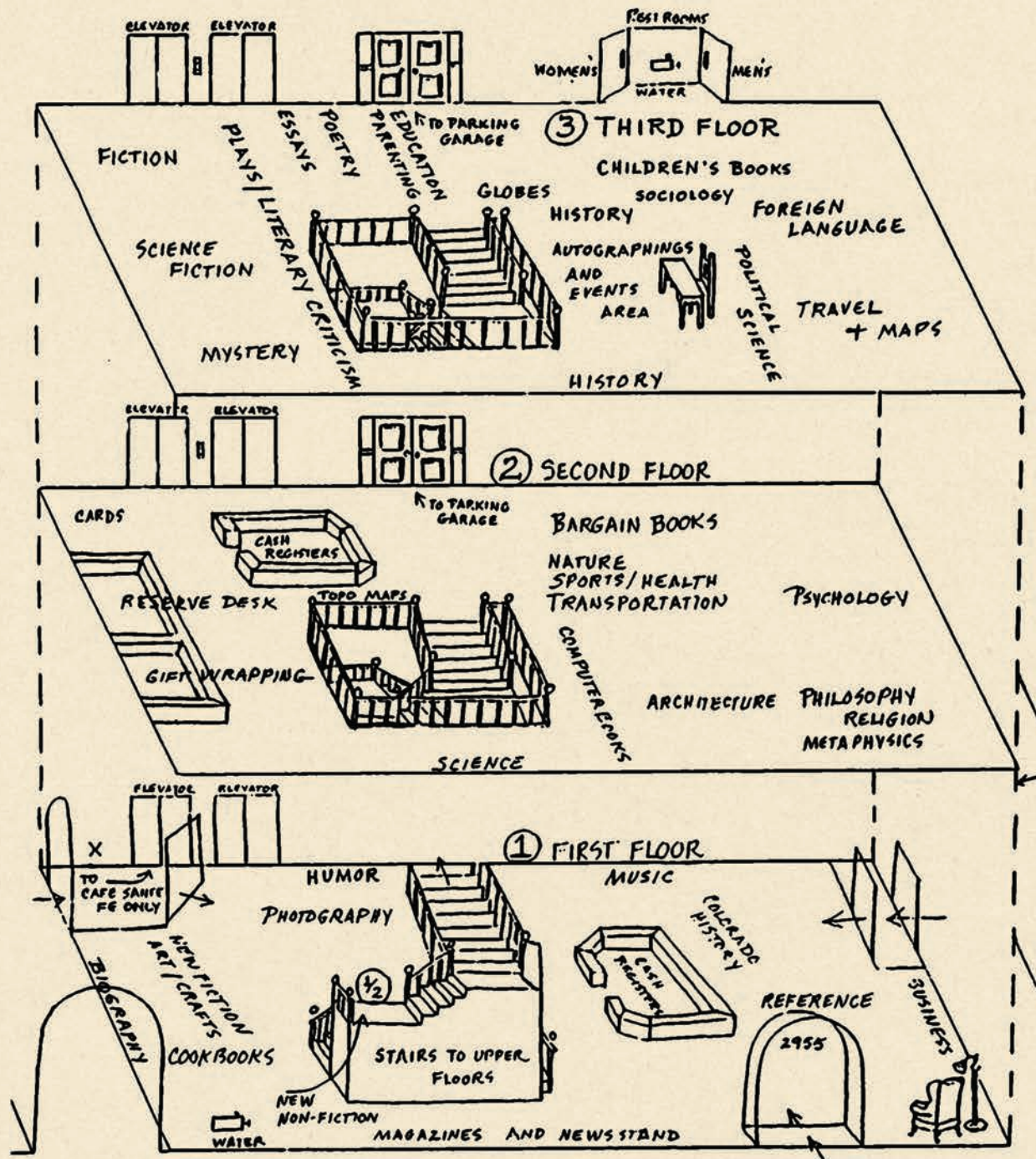
In my experience, publishing has been both characterized and influenced by change. The grand old guard exemplified by Harper, Lippincott, Holt, Little Brown, Dutton etc. had been roused from torpor in the 1920s and '30s by a group of smart young things who created their own publishing history in the face of what appeared to be a reaction against anything new. They were a colorful bunch and so different from each other editorially: Dick Simon and Max Schuster, Harold Guinzburg (Viking), Alfred and Blanche Knopf, Bennett

The Business of Publishing

We didn't know there was a dress code at S & S, since micro-mini skirts didn't pose a problem, but all hell broke loose the minute women started wearing pants to the office.



Tattered Cover in Cherry Creek Floor Map



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