



The Tryout Smith Monument Project

Introduction

By David Goudsward

H. P. Lovecraft is always associated with tentacles. Granted his idea of an indescribable horror invariably included a tentacle or two, but I would argue that perhaps a more fitting representation for the Old Gent from Providence would be a printing press.

In the wake of a war of words in *Argosy* magazine's letters column in 1914, Lovecraft was recruited to join the United Amateur Press Association. The UAPA was a collection of amateur writers and clubs from around the country who wrote and published amateur journals which were then mailed to other amateurs. Participation in Amateur Journalism transformed Lovecraft from a reader into a writer who could and would influence other readers and writers beyond the amateur journalists and publishers.

Of the amateur journals Lovecraft appeared in, only W. Paul Cook was as influential as Tryout Smith. Cook met Lovecraft in 1917 through amateur journalism. His encouragement was such that Lovecraft began writing fiction for public consumption in 1917. Cook published many of Lovecraft's early tales and poems in his amateur journal *Vagrant*, but Smith and his *Tryout* was where Lovecraft's poetry and early essays first saw ink. His first appearance was "The Power of Wine: A Satire" in April 1916 and by the end of 1917, his résumé included more than a dozen pieces in the *Tryout* under his name and several aliases.

Lovecraft also sent articles to Smith for publication, but initially, not the weird tales Lovecraft is known for. A July 1917 letter to correspondent Rheinhart Kleiner has Lovecraft calling Smith a "living incarnation of conventional types of pastoral poetry," so Lovecraft sent poetry. Once Lovecraft and Smith began corresponding less formally, weird stories start making their debut – "The Cats of Ulthar" (November 1920) and "The Terrible Old Man" (July 1921) were among the first.

The *Tryout* was an unofficial arm of the National Amateur Press Association, a rival organization to Lovecraft's own UAPA. Although Lovecraft was active in the UAPA politics and held various offices, he joined the rival NAPA only at Smith's urging. Except for an unexpected stint as interim NAPA president in 1922–23, Lovecraft deliberately limited his NAPA participation to an occasional convention appearance and contributions to Smith's *Tryout* and Cook's *Vagrant*.



Tryout meets Recluse, Haverhill, October 1931.

The friendship broadened both men's circle of friends. Lovecraft would comment on other contributions and contributors would comment on his works. Smith would not let critique turn into debate, and this civil discourse in *Tryout* led to direct correspondence that became a mutual support group of writers that would include such future luminaries as Fritz Leiber and Robert Bloch.

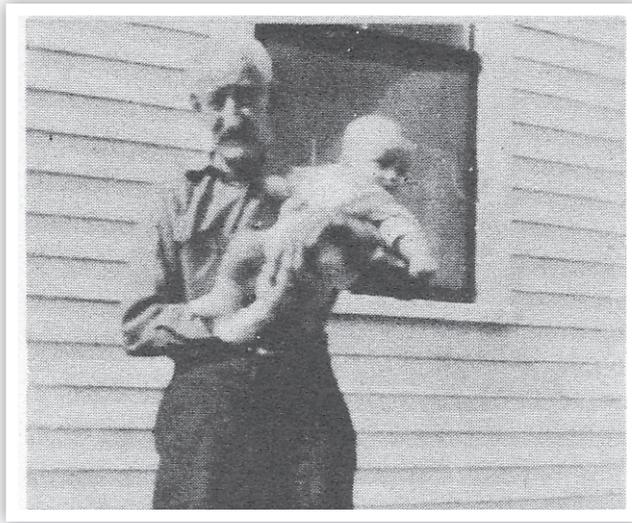
Lovecraft stopped in Haverhill solely to visit the elderly typesetter, one of the rare guests Smith encouraged. Between his deafness and an overcrowded household, Smith wasn't comfortable with visitors. In spite of his iconic status in Amateur Journalism, he only attended one AJ convention. In October 1931, Lovecraft and W. Paul Cook made an auto tour that culminated in the only time Cook and Smith would meet. Lovecraft considered it a momentous event.

W. Paul Cook decided to publish tributes to his old friend Lovecraft, who had died in 1937. Many remembrances were solicited, but Cook felt none was better than the one from Tryout Smith, who simply wrote: "He was my friend."

At 91, Tryout decided it was time to end *Tryout*. His health had declined to the point that his printing press had been moved into his bedroom to minimize exertion. The final issue was August 1944, ending *Tryout's* thirty-year run (255 issues). Charles W. "Tryout" Smith died on February 17, 1948, at the age of 95. He was buried in Haverhill's Hilldale Cemetery in a family plot.

Until now, the only headstone marking the family plot was his father's Civil War veteran stone. Now, 70 years later, thanks to a grant from The Aeroflex Foundation, one of the earliest and most influential of Lovecraft's supporters has an appropriate marker for his final resting place.

'Tryout' Smith's Autobiography



I was born in Haverhill, Mass., October 24, 1852. In my 90th year, I haven't lost any ambition, nor interest in life and world affairs.

In the late 1860s, before I heard of Amateur Journalism, I was playing with a Lowe Press, printing visiting cards.¹ It was no good, so when the Novelty Press came out in 1870 I purchased one, and my brothers, H.C. [Herbert] and F.H. [Frank], and I did quite a bit of small printing.²

One day in 1872 a boy who lived in Exeter, NH, showed me an issue of Wingate's *Boys' Gem* and said it was printed by a boy. I showed it to my brothers when I got home. They were greatly interested and wanted to start a paper, but we had no body type.

I got in touch with Wingate who gave me information about Amateur Journalism. Later I met him, Frank H. Pinkham, and Hoyt at Exeter.³ I made arrangements to go to Boston with Wingate and organize the Eastern Amateur Press Association, but I could not make it for lack of funds.

Later my brother H.C. had a chance to buy a small printing outfit. There were two fonts of body type, a lot of fancy type, and a 13 by 19 Cottage Press.⁴ This gave us type for a paper, so in 1872 we started the *Boys' Companion*, of which four numbers were printed. We also printed the *Jolly Joker*, *Pick Me Up*, and the *Nonpareil*.

Postage on papers was paid then at the receiving office, but most of the amateurs were printing for exchange and exchanges went free. So the postage cost nothing. Later the post office put the postage on the publisher and at 1 cent on each paper. This caused the suspension of many papers, the *Boys' Companion* among them.

I started a mail-order business of "50 cards for 10 cents,"

but I didn't print many of them. My father moved and having no place for the printing material, it was stored away. Later he moved to 4 Auburn Street and my brother, who was ill and unable to do any hard work, suggested that we start an advertising paper. He thought he could obtain enough ads to make it pay. We had the equipment to print such a paper, but the suggestion did not appeal to me, as I was thinking of getting into the card printing business again. Still, I thought if my brother had something he could do, it might help him. So the *Monthly Visitor* was started in 1888 by F.H. Smith & Co. I was the Co. The first three numbers went along fine and the profit was upward of \$20.

When it came to the fourth month, my brother was in bed and unable to solicit any ads. The *Visitor* would have ended then had it not been for a subscription list of several hundred. I knew of AJ and had kept in touch with it by subscribing to the papers that had been sent to me. In order to fill out the *Visitor's* subscription list, I decided to continue it as an amateur publication. It was the first widely circulated amateur paper ever printed, 700 to 800 copies each issue. One credit to it was the recruiting of James F. Morton and his brother Nelson, their first contributions being printed in it.⁵

I received many letters of encouragement from the amateurs. Harriet C. Cox sent a bundle of papers, among them the official organs of the New England and Massachusetts Amateur Press Associations, with application blanks. I joined both. Charlie Burger wrote in his masterful style: "You are eligible to membership in the National Amateur Press Association, so you will at once fill out the enclosed application blank and return it to me with \$2 for initiation fee and dues." I did and was then a full-fledged amateur and I have been ever since. I suspended the *Monthly Visitor* in 1899 as I had gone into business for myself.

In the early years, I bought short stories and novels from Richard Gerner, later the father of Nita Gerner Smith.⁶ H.C. Smith & Co. (I was the Co.) printed his *Lord of Monteith*, and I printed the *Curse of Passion*, as booklets in 1873. We also bought Gerner's novel *Born to be Hung*, but sold it to Almon Pitts, of Akron, Ohio, who printed it in 1874.

About 1911 Edith Minitier wanted me to print a memorial to Susan B. Robbins. I wanted to do it, as I held her in high esteem. But I had no press nor type and told Edith I couldn't do it. But it kept bobbing up in my mind, and at last, I bought an 8 x 10 Pilot Press and type, and the memorial was issued. Having material to print and getting my fingers again in the type case and my hand on the lever of a press, I hated to stop printing.

My eyes were bothering me and I didn't think they could stand the strain of setting type. I chawed over the matter for some time and I thought I can give my eyes a tryout anyway. If I issue a paper I thought, I'll call it "Tryout." And that's how *Tryout* came to be named in 1914. Calling myself Tryout was the suggestion of Howard P. Lovecraft. One of my letters to him was signed Tryout and it pleased him. Since then I have signed all my letters Tryout. I get letters addressed to Tryout Smith, Chas. Tryout Smith, and several other combinations. I never thought or expected that the name or the paper would become so well-known throughout Amateur Journalism.

When a youth of 14 to 17, I enjoyed playing billiards. I was a member of the Penny Ante Club, which used to meet evenings. One night when I was absent the police raided the club. About that time a chum learned the printer's trade. It fascinated me to watch him set type and kick the little press. I wanted to print. That is when I bought that Lowe Press. As evenings were the only time I could devote to printing, I quit the gang and stayed home. That little press was the turning point of my life. Printing has always been a hobby. I never made a business of it, unless card printing may be considered such. I have printed a lot for my friends, but never considered I was in the printing business. At 90 I haven't lost my interest in type or press since I got that Lowe Press in 1867. Never could do good work, but it has been one of my greatest pleasures for 75 years. I am as eager to print and mail-out *Tryout* now as when I sent out the first number in 1914.

Two years ago Hadley Smith started a movement, which was endorsed by Spink, Vondy, Edkins, and others,⁷ to elect me president of the National Amateur Press Association, but I refused the nomination. Had I wanted the office, I would have made a try for it a long ago when I had the strength to administer its affairs. But when the Philadelphia convention elected me the first and only honorary life member, I accepted the unusual honor, as no one else had achieved it.

In August 1939 I wrote Vondy: "I have a commission I want to accomplish and I'm going to ask you to be the 'victim.' I have a large trunk full of amateur journalistic publications, and I am looking around to find a home for them. I understand the New York Public Library has quite a collection and wants more. A bound file of Tryout is on exhibition there, and the Library has a complete file because some time ago it applied to me for some missing numbers. If the Library will accept and file my collection, I will send it. I want to put it where there is some interest in it."

Vondy reported that the Library would be very glad to have my collection. So I sent about 10,000 papers and some amateur books and convention photos. An exhibition entitled "Amateur Periodicals: Selections from the Charles W. Smith and Other Collections" was on view

from April 10 to May 11, 1941, in room 112, the New York Public Library.

I have always lived in Haverhill, except for three years in Plaistow, NH. Educated in public school, one term in Grammar School. I left school to go to work when 13. The soldiers were returning from the Civil War, wounded and sick, and many of them unable to work. Business was starting to pick up and with help being scarce, many boys went to work at good wages. My first job was in a stock room in a factory. I gave it up to work in a large wood-en-box factory as an "all-around." Later I learned to nail boxes, then to fit them. In about five years the boss of the mill made me foreman, which job I held over 18 years.

In 1897 I purchased the box business and went into business for myself and made some money. I developed a fine case of nervous prostration which came near putting me among my folks in Hilldale Cemetery. Owing to the illness, I gave up the business in 1903 and retired.

I married Ida J. Boynton, a nurse, in September 1878. She died in December 1885, and I never married again. We had two children, Jennie and Susan. They married and had 3 boys and 3 girls, who have had 11 children. My 6 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren are living.

I came to 408 Groveland Street in 1900 to live with my daughter Susan. She died and I still live with my son-in-law. Three old fellows make the home now—one is 68, another is 78, and I am 90.⁸ We do the housekeeping and cooking on a gas range, but a woman comes in several days a week to wash and clean. My press and type are now in my bedroom.

I have a library of old books, mostly from the nineteenth century. I like history and narratives best, but read everything from "Penny Dreadfuls" to the *Bible*. All my folks were Methodists.

I smoke "like a house afire." My first smokes were cheroots which I swiped from my father's box when 8 years old. I smoked them in my room under the skylight, so that the smoke might pass outdoors. I kept swiping those cheroots until I was caught and got a spanking. I never was much of a cigarette smoker, but sometimes when friends drop in to play whilst I take one from the package on the table. I like best a clay pipe, which men smoked many years ago.

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¹ The Lowe Press was first "boy's press" – small, portable, and inexpensive. Marketed to both amateurs and small businesses, it had gotten its start in the Civil War, printing field dispatches, and orders. It had an odd design - the usual flat platen was replaced by a wooden rolling conical cylinder which tended to produce irregular impressions.

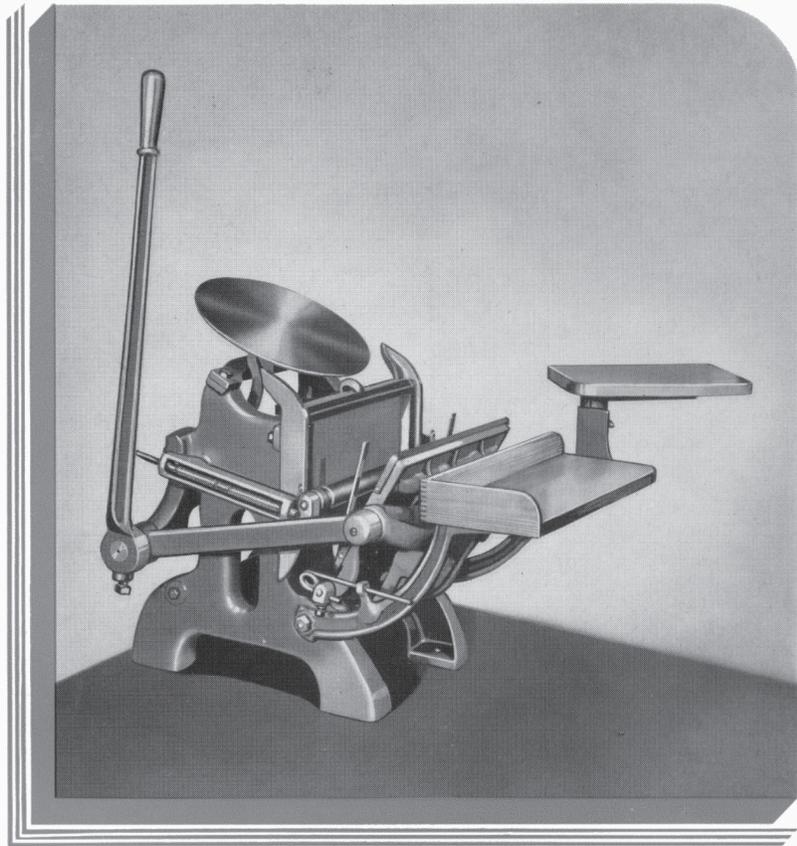
² Novelty Job Printing Press offered both small and commercial

THE CHANDLER AND PRICE PILOT PRESS

● Standard equipment on the Chandler & Price Pilot Press includes a single disc, depressible grippers, one semi-steel chase, one wrench, two cast rollers, four roller trucks, upper feed board and delivery board. Can be equipped with small fountain if desired.

● The inside measurements of the chase are 6½ by 10 inches.

● The total weight of this press, boxed ready for shipment, is 210 pounds. Immediate delivery can be made from stock.



presses, but the Smith brothers probably went with the “Duodecimo,” the company’s least expensive offering. It was a table model and hand-powered via a lever, as opposed to most of their other presses, which used a foot-powered pedal instead.

³ James D. P. Wingate (1855 -1937), the publisher of the *Boys’ Gem*, went on to become a newspaper publisher, establishing a number of newspapers across New England. Frank H. Pinkham (1854-1929) took a different approach, building his amateur paper’s readership locally to the point he could transition it into a professional newspaper, *The Newmarket Advertiser*, the local newspaper of record until his death.

⁴ The Adams Cottage Press, was an improvement, but not a fast one. The type was inked by hand, then a sheet of paper was placed over the inked type. A crank turned to slide the bed of the press below the cylinder to produce an impression on the paper.

⁵ James Morton is today remembered primarily as a correspondent of Lovecraft. He was president of the National Amateur Press Association two decade before Lovecraft entered amateur journalism. In his lifetime, Morton was a freethinking anarchist, and an

outspoken advocate of civil rights, a single tax rate, naturism, free speech, Esperanto, and birth control. He became curator of the Paterson, NJ museum, propelling its geology collection to national recognition. His brother Nelson also served terms as president of NAPA, and the New England Amateur Press Association before becoming an editor for Associated Press. All the Morton siblings were active in amateur journalism, but Nelson and James were involved for an extended time.

⁶ Nita Gerner Smith was an amateur journalist in her own right, and a historian of the hobby. Her contributions have often been overlooked by the work of her father and her husband, Edwin Hadley Smith, the moving force behind The Library of Amateur Journalism now housed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

⁷ Much like his mention of Harriet C. Cox and Charles Burger, previously, Helm C. Spink, Edna “Vondy” Hyde McDonald, and Ernest A. Edkins were early proponents and leaders in Amateur Journalism.

⁸ Tryout’s roommates on Grove Street were his son-in-law Charles E Britton and his brother William F Britton.

The Haverhill Convention

By H. P. Lovecraft

(Originally published in *Tryout*, July 1921)

Of the various shrines renowned in the annals of amateur journalism, none surpasses in importance that which bears the title of 408 Groveland St., Haverhill, Mass. It is here that *Tryout* is issued faithfully from month to month, and here that C. W. Smith, leader in publishing enterprise since 1889, presides like a patron deity over an Arcadian domain.

Yet notwithstanding these things, 408 Groveland St. still remains a terra incognita to most amateurs. Like the forbidden city of some royal dynasty, it is sacred ground, trodden only by the elect. Now and then some favoured mortal makes the pilgrimage and returns, but the number of such pilgrims is not great. It is therefore scarcely to be wondered at that a pardonable pride fills the souls of those who, on the afternoon of Thursday, June 9 [1921], participated in the unofficial Haverhill convention.

This convention was, in truth, not large; consisting only of the host, his learned and brilliant author neighbour, Miss Myrta Alice Little, A.M., of Hampstead, N.H., Historian-Elect of the U.A.P.A, and the undersigned; together with Thomas Tryout, the Official Cat, and small Annette, the Official Mascot.¹ In enthusiasm, however, it atoned for its slender attendance; for, as may be imagined, there is amateurical inspiration in every cubic inch of the atmosphere of the *Tryout* office. Each delegate is eager for a repetition of the event on a longer scale.

My own credentials for admission to this conclave were those of a servitor and scribbler. For some years I have been attached to the *Tryout* staff as rhymester, rhyme-collector, historian and proofreader (of limited sections only), and had naturally acquired an increasing desire to behold with physical eye my benevolent "boss" and his publishing plant. Was not my one and only "book," *Looking Backward* here given the immortality of print? Now the hour had arrived, and guided by the new lettered luminary whose kind invitation had brought me north, and whose delightful family had royally entertained me at Little Towers in Hampstead, I entered the Elysian meads and groves of *Regio Tryoutiana*. Haverhill, let me add, is the most delectable of disappointments. Prepared to behold a dingy manufacturing town, the traveller is astonished by a city of beautiful homes, lawns, trees and gardens; in taste and attractiveness second to none.

Amid such an environment, it is not strange that *Tryout* should possess its delightfully Doric air of pastoral grace.

Flanked by fertile flower and vegetable gardens, and

6 Tryout Smith Monument Project



Tryout Smith and Lovecraft facing Water Street. The tip of Hales Island in the Merrimack is visible behind them, October, 1931.

blessed with a background of mystical faun peopled woods dear to the editor's heart, stands the pleasant cottage numbered 408 Groveland St. In the rear, reached by a broad verdure-bordered path, is the Holy of Holies—*Tryout* office. Here, with walls made colorful by pictures, stamps, buttons, post-cards, and countless other accumulations of delightful nature, rests the faithful *Tryout* press with its type-cases, piles of paper, files, and other accessories, the whole establishment ruled by the genial editor.

To do justice here to Mr. Charles W. Smith is impossible, since it is he who will put these remarks into type; so I will content myself by describing *Tryout's* creator as a slender, wholesome, outdoor-looking man. He claims to have been born many centuries B.C., but in aspect and carriage nothing but youth is suggested.

From his trim iron-grey hair and beard, and erect, well-proportioned form, one might pronounce him forty five or fifty; yet he vows that this is a gross underestimation. Mr. Smith is a shining embodiment of those doctrines which teach the blessings of contentment and rural retirement. As Mr. Pope hath it:

"Happy the man whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound;
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

* * * *

Sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation."²

Gifted with health, our Tryout is never idle or listless; but spends his days as Nature intended, at once pleasing himself and conferring pleasure on others. He is a monarch in his fair domain; a spirit ever youthful, constantly revived by his quiet pursuits—editing, printing, walking, exploring "Whittierland," stampcollecting, and conversing with his grandchild-mascot and playful nine-year-old Thomas cat. He recalls the familiar lines of the Mantuan swain:

Tityre, tu patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi

Silvestrem tenui Musam meditaris avena;

Nos patriae finis et delicia linquimus arva;

Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra,

*Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.*³

Mr. Smith's own writing reflects much of this Arcadian colour in inimitable fashion, and it is to be regretted that he does not allot a large portion of magazine space for such quaint and unforgettable essays as "Anent the Melancholy Days" and "Scared? No-o-o!"

Two hours is all too brief an interval for a full-sized convention, but much can be compressed therein amidst an atmosphere as saturated with amateur tradition as it that of *Tryout* office. Files of *Tryouts* and *Monthly Visitors* were produced, old convention photographs studied, and vain inquiries made as to the identity of "Lester Kirk" and "Dame Gossip." The meeting of two Merrimack Valley leaders like Miss Little and Mr. Smith, representing the newest as well as the oldest traditions of the amateur world, should augur well for future local activity, especially since another gifted Haverhill litterateur is about to join the ranks of the United.

Altogether, the Haverhill convention was a decided success. Washington and Boston may furnish imitations impressive in point of numbers, yet neither can command so central a position in the ocean of amateur efforts. *Tryout* is the social lifeblood and nervous system of the fraternity today; if any doubt it, let him try to picture an amateurdom devoid of this indispensable bond and inspiration.

¹ A lifelong cat lover, Lovecraft would later write an elegy for the cat's death that appeared in *Tryout*, December 1921. Mascot Annette was his 6-year old granddaughter Annette Britton. Myrta Little was the host of Lovecraft's first two visits to the Merrimack Valley, and a potential romantic interest, unbeknownst to Lovecraft.

² Excerpt from "Ode to Solitude" by Alexander Pope.

³ Virgil's *Eclagues* (1.1-5) The opening introduces a herdsman who is currently experiencing good fortune in a bucolic life.

Lovecraft on Tryout

Smith is a lean, wiry man of medium stature & good features, with a short iron-grey beard, a good head of iron-grey hair & a bronzed weather-beaten complexion gained by his outdoor programme. He wears old clothes—which sit neatly & quaintly on his active frame—& has a pleasant voice with a somewhat rural accent. His deafness is no obstacle to conversation if one speaks incisively & near his ear. He confesses to 69 years, but does not look a day over 50. In person he bears out every impression which one gains from the *Tryout*—I like him immeasurably, for he is one of the most unspoiled, simple, contented, artless, and altogether

delightful small boy of his age that I have ever beheld. He never grew up, but lives on without any of the dull complexities of adulthood—active, busy with his little press, stamp album, cat, and woodland excursions—in short a perfect old *Damaetas* whom *Theocritus* would have loved to delineate. Let none tell me hereafter that my Georgian pastorals are not true to life; for I have with mine own eyes seen happy *Tityrus* in his beechen shade. Smith says he wants to leave me all his old amateur papers, but I tell him he must live on forever, like the kindly, gracious old faun he is!

—Lovecraft to Rheinart Kleiner, June 12, 1921.

Tryout Smith and the Amateur Journalism Hobby

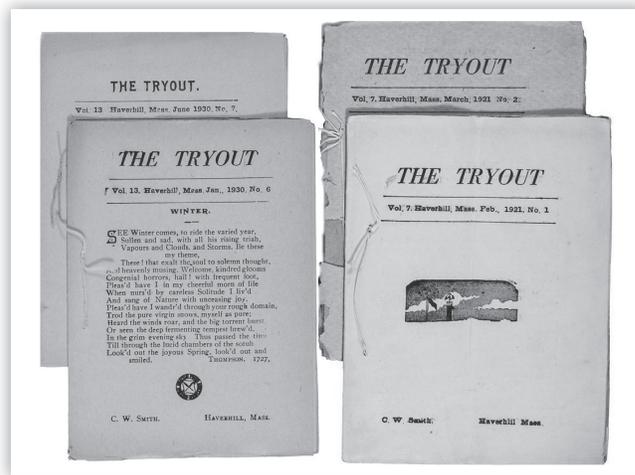
By Ken Faig, Jr., President,
The Fossils - Historians of Amateur Journalism

The most amazing thing about Tryout Smith's involvement in the amateur journalism hobby is the seventy-two years period which it covers—from *The Boys' Companion* which Smith and his brother Herbert C. Smith first published in Haverhill in 1872 to the final issue of *Tryout* in August 1944.

One of the most noted amateur journalists active during Smith's early period of activity was Richard Gerner, whose collected works in a dozen or so noble blue-bound volumes form part of the Library of Amateur Journalism assembled by his son-in-law Edwin Hadley Smith. H. C. Smith & Co. printed Gerner's thriller *The Lord of Monteith, or the Secret of the Red Chamber* as a chapbook in 1873; C. W. Smith followed in the same year with *The Curse of Passion, or \$10,000 Reward, Dead or Alive*, in the same year. During the same period, the Smith brothers managed to issue *Nonpareil*, *The Jolly Joker* and *Pick Me Up* as well. You will need to go to the Hyman Bradofsky Collection at the Bancroft Library to read H. C. Smith's 1873 chapbook; and to the Beinecke Collection at Yale to read C. W. Smith's chapbook of the same year. Some of their early 1872-73 amateur magazines you will not find anywhere.

There are really only two significant gaps in Tryout's amateur publishing history. The first was the period 1874-87 when Smith's marriage to Ida Boynton intervened in 1876, the birth of two daughters in 1878 and 1880, and Mrs. Smith's early death in 1885. During this period, Smith worked in a box factory in Haverhill. Then in 1898-1913 Smith, having purchased the box-making business in 1897, had to give it up on account of nervous prostration and retire in 1903. By 1910, he had taken up residence in the household of his son-in-law Charles E. Britton at 408 Groveland Street in Haverhill. There he was to spend the rest of his life except for the period 1923-26 which he spent in Plaistow, New Hampshire. (*Tryout* was only suspended for six months during this three-year disruption.) These two periods totaling twenty-eight years are the only real gaps in Smith's amateur publishing résumé.

From 1888 to 1897, he issued an amazing 114 numbers of *The Monthly Visitor*, distributed primarily to members of the New England Amateur Press Association (NEAPA). A final 115th number followed in August 1899. Tryout's brother Frank H. Smith (1854/55-1896) was publisher in 1889-93, and Frances A. Parsons served



as co-editor in 1895-97. Then in December 1914 Smith began the remarkable series of 255 numbers of *Tryout* which only ceased in August 1944. The NEAPA had ceased in 1904, so the primary distribution of *Tryout* was to members of the National Amateur Press Association (NAPA, founded 1876) and the two rival factions of the United Amateur Press Association (UAPA, founded 1895). There were no association bundles until the 1930s and as far as I am aware *Tryout* was never circulated in any association bundle. Most of its circulation was to fellow amateur journalists who traded their publications with Smith.

Smith was notorious for the frequent typographic errors found in his publications, which infuriated contributors unaware of Smith's age and failing eyesight. Lovecraft, who gave Smith the nickname "Tryout Smith," was occasionally vexed by the errors but sympathetic as to the reason for them, quaintly referred to them as "tryoutisms."

The hobby witnessed many changes over Smith's long period of activity. A hobby which still consisted primarily of adolescents and young adults in the closing decades of the nineteenth century morphed into a hobby involving primarily older adults, some of them veterans of earlier periods of activity, in the twentieth century. The raucous politics which could be excused in part as juvenile antics in the nineteenth century, morphed into vicious quarrels as the twentieth century progressed. Even as its ranks shrank in the wake of the First World War, NAPA was racked with quarrels as the next decade progressed. At one point, Smith's *Tryout* was the only journal being actively produced for the association. In 1928, only four persons showed up for NAPA's annual convention

held in Niagara Falls, New York. However, times could change quickly—Vincent B. Haggerty, elected president by the minuscule 1928 convention, led a vigorous administration, and by 1930 NAPA had one of its best-attended conventions in Boston. “Young blood” had become one of the mantras in all of the associations by the 1930s; however, wizened veterans like Smith continued their activity.

NAPA’s Boston conventions in 1921 and 1930 were the only two national amateur journalism conventions ever attended by H. P. Lovecraft, who curiously attended none of the conventions of his faction of UAPA (in which he was active from 1914 until its demise in 1926). Smith had an even sparser convention record than Lovecraft. Extremely shy, troubled by nervous ailments and in later years, profound deafness, Smith is believed to have attended only one NEAPA convention. According to Nita Gerner Smith, a one-year term as official editor in the Massachusetts Amateur Press Association was the only amateur office he ever held. He rarely entertained visitors, but liked H. P. Lovecraft well enough to entertain him several at his Haverhill home.

When copies can be found, the issues of *Tryout* in which Smith published stories by Lovecraft are today expensive collector’s items. However, Smith published many more amateur writers than Lovecraft, and continued to draw on his stable of authors throughout *Tryout*’s thirty-year run in 1914-44. From time to time, he also published special items, like his tributes to Susan Brown Robbins in 1914 and to Edith Minitzer in 1934, as well as his editions of Lovecraft’s *Looking Backward* in 1920 and Eugene Kuntz’s *Thoughts and Pictures* in 1932. Eventually, Smith moved his printing press from the shed behind 408 Groveland Street into his bedroom. Smith made other changes in old age--in the 1940s, he began to issue *Tryout* in covers made from wallpaper in floral and other colorful patterns.

Even into his mid-nineties, Smith would take the city bus if he had business in downtown Haverhill. When Smith finally no longer had they eyessight and energy to produce *Tryout*, Emerson Duerr began a new series of *Tryout*, and for the inaugural issue (dated Oct. 24, 1947), Smith wrote the following poem:

I am ninety-five today,
An age that but few attain;
Not strong, but enjoy good health,
And I hope the years I have lived
Have not been wholly in vain.

One great accomplishment of *Tryout*’s later years in the hobby was the donation of his collection of 10,000 amateur journals to the New York Public Library in 1939. In the spring of 1941, the Library staged an exhibition of Smith’s amateur papers, books, and photographs. The collection has over the years been one of the most heavily-used archival sources for scholars investigating the amateur journalism hobby.

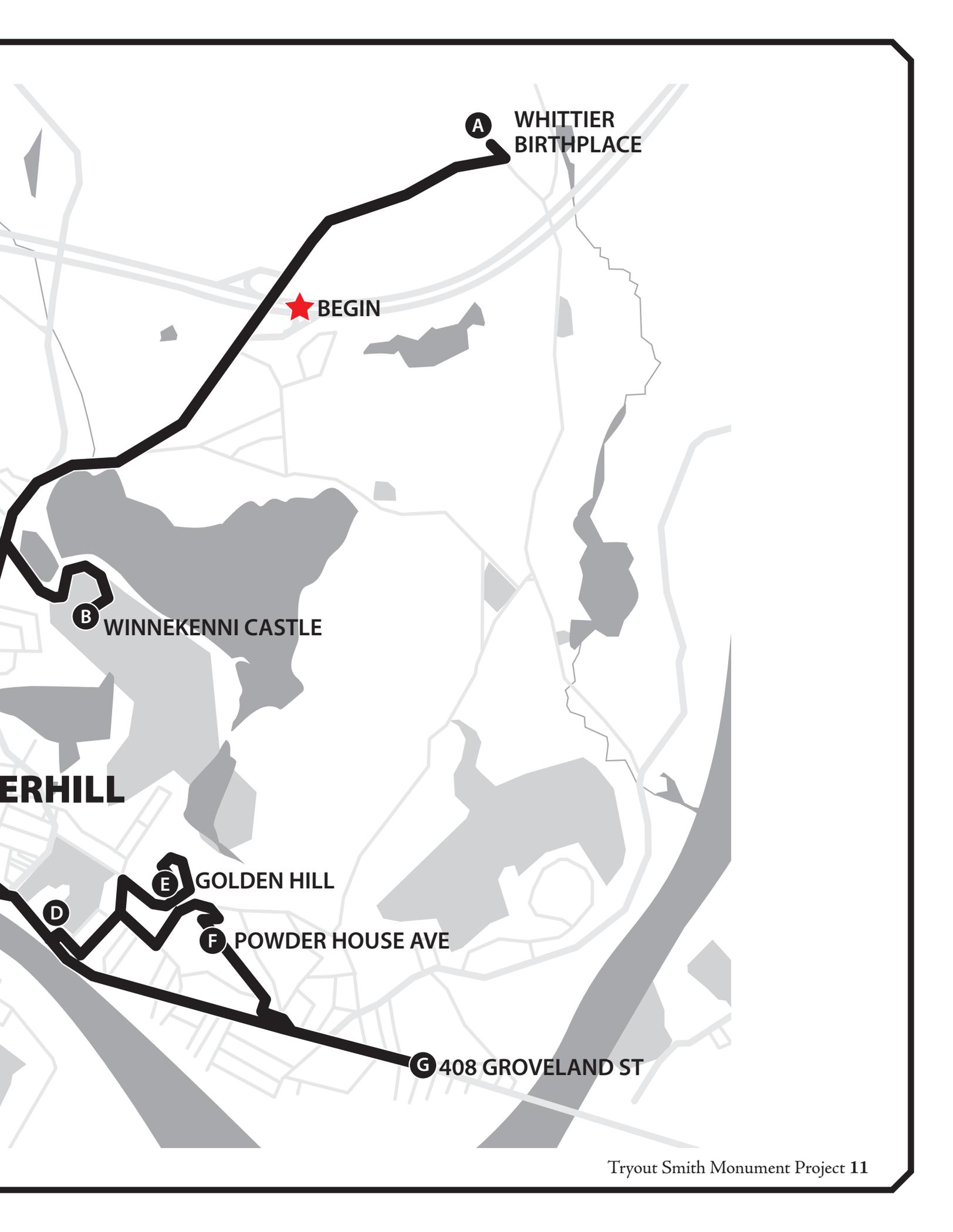
Smith died on Feb. 17, 1948, less than four months after publishing his ninety-fifth birthday poem. But in the 10,000 amateur journals that he donated to the New York Public Library—and in the determination seen in the famous photograph taken seated at his typewriter in his ninetieth year—*Tryout* Smith lives on in the memory of the amateur journalism hobby. A long run of *Tryout* is one of the important elements of the William H. Groveman Memorial Collection at the University of Iowa. In many ways, it is true that *Tryout* Smith is still as alive today as when he began printing his first amateur magazines at the age of twenty in 1872 and when he printed his last at the age of nearly ninety-two in 1944.

Support for the Tryout Smith Monument Project was generously provided by



THE AEROFLEX FOUNDATION





A

WHITTIER
BIRTHPLACE



BEGIN

B

WINNEKENNI CASTLE

WHITTIER

E

GOLDEN HILL

D

F

POWDER HOUSE AVE

G

408 GROVELAND ST

A Driving Tour of Lovecraft's Haverhill

⇒ **Tour Start:** Take Exit 52 (Route 110) off I-495. You are now on Amesbury Road.

Amesbury Road

A trolley line ran parallel to Amesbury Road, connecting Haverhill to, among other places, Amesbury, Merrimac, and Newburyport. Lovecraft would visit all three. In April 1923, Lovecraft arrived by train in downtown Haverhill and boarded a trolley that took him past the Whittier Birthplace and into Merrimac, MA, the home of Edgar Davis, one of his last amateur press recruits. With Davis, Lovecraft visited the Amesbury sites associated with Whittier, followed by his first visit to the Newburyport. Subsequent trips would involve visits to Newburyport and then Haverhill – this road was very familiar to Lovecraft, as was the most famous landmark on the road – the birthplace of John Greenleaf Whittier.

⇒ **Turn East onto Amesbury Road (Route 110). Drive one mile to Whittier Road.**

A - Whittier Birthplace

305 Whittier Road

The birthplace of John Greenleaf Whittier was built in 1688 by Thomas Whittier. The house was home to five generations of Whittiers before the birth of the Quaker poet and abolitionist on December 17, 1807. Open seasonally. Admission fee.

Lovecraft mentions passing the site several times on the trolley heading to/from Newburyport. He never specifically stated he had visited the house, but a letter to Helen Sully in 1933 suggests he may have.

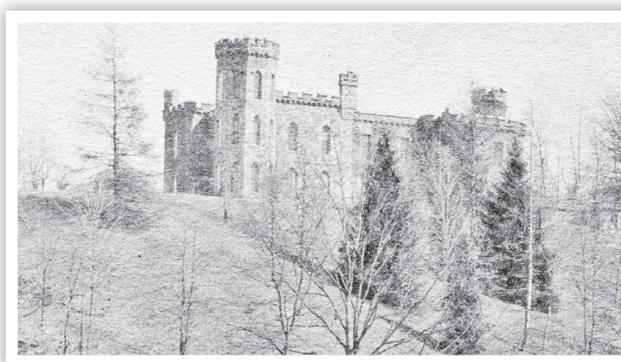
⇒ **Turn Right, exiting Whittier Road and proceed west for 2 miles on Amesbury Road (Route 110). Amesbury Road will become Kenoza Ave at the junction with Newton Road (Route 108). Continue on Kenoza Ave (Route 110) for another 0.2 mile. Turn left at the field stone turrets. Proceed 0.5 mile on Castle Road. Caution: Road is narrow and shared with pedestrians. It is barely wide enough for two-way traffic, and winds through forests with multiple blind curves. Low speed and caution highly suggested.**

B - Winnekenni Castle

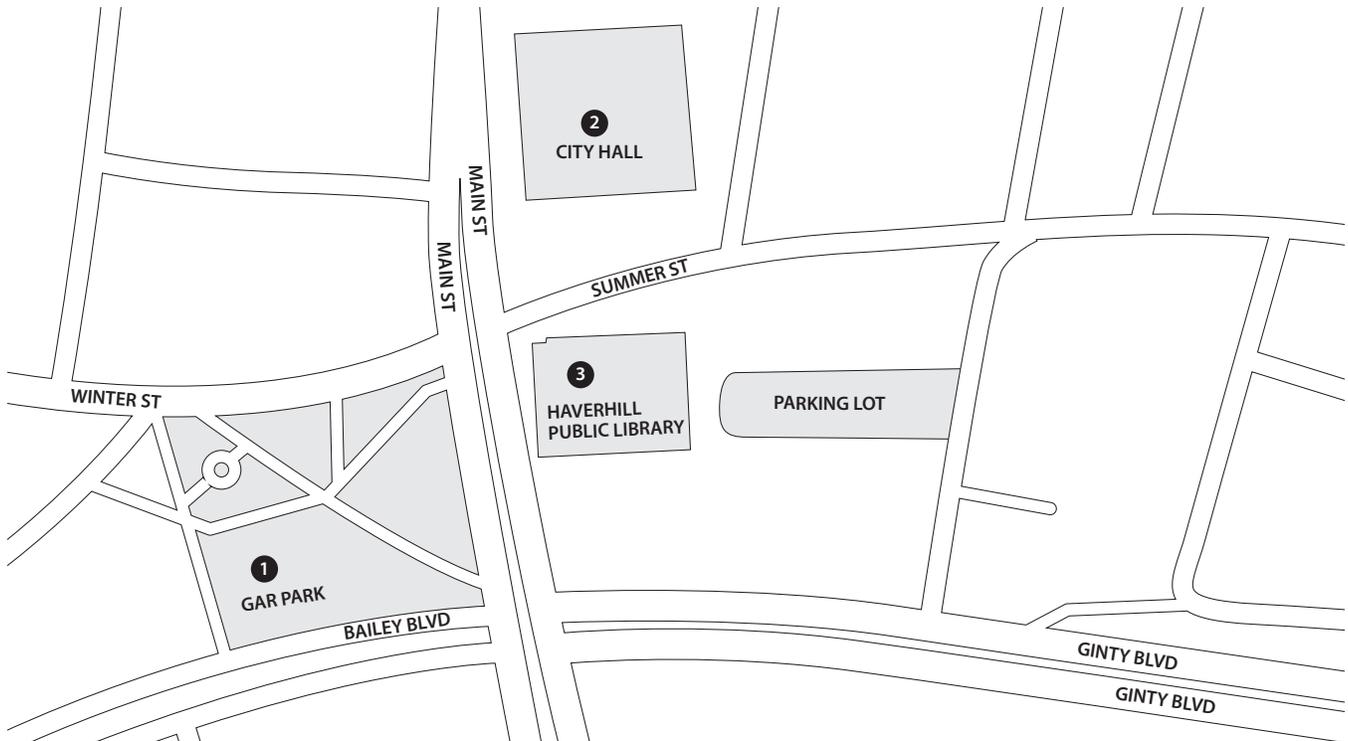
347 Kenoza Avenue

The Winnekenni Park Conservation Area (700+ acres), overlooking Kenoza Lake, is home to the castle. It was built for Dr. James Nichols, a horticulturist and chemist. Nichols used the castle not only as a summer home but also as a place to field-test his experiments in chemical fertilizers. Today, Winnekenni Castle is the center of a conservation woodland with nine miles of walking trails that ring the castle.

Lovecraft visited the park in 1921 with correspondent Myrta Little of Hampstead, NH. He was apparently impressed with the two-story fieldstone structure and three-story turret, overlooking Kenoza Lake. He referred to the castle as picturesque and claimed he would not have been surprised to see a ghostly knight on patrol. He later hypothesized that because Haverhill had essentially had been built up since the 1870s, the missing colonial neighborhoods were being compensated for by buildings in medieval styles, specifically Winnekenni Castle and the English Tudor half-timber manor house that was the Haverhill Country Club clubhouse (since destroyed).



⇒ Return to Kenoza Ave (Route 110) and turn left. Proceed .8 mile on Kenoza Ave to the intersection with Main Street (Route 125). At the traffic light, turn left onto Main Street. Proceed .3 mile south on Main Street to the intersection with Winter and Summer Streets. Turn left onto Summer Street. Proceed 0.1 mile to the first right turn (Stage Street). Turn right onto Stage Street and enter the parking lot attached to the Haverhill Library. Exit car and proceed on foot.



C - Main & Summer Streets

C1 - Hannah Duston Statue

The green woman on a pedestal waving a hatchet is not difficult to find within the park. It is a monument to Haverhill's colonial folk-figure Hannah Duston, captured in 1697 by an Abenaki war party. Duston eventually escaped while being transported to Canada for slavery. She killed the Indian party while they slept, scalped the ten corpses for proof of her heroism and headed down river in a canoe back to Haverhill.

Lovecraft notes that she was the "prime heroine of her region" and that Haverhill honored her with a "sumptuous monument in the main square." That main square was a small green where Summer Street, Main Street, and Vestry Place met. Today, after urban renewal, Vestry Place is gone and Winter Street has been straightened to meet Summer Street at Main Street, necessitating the relocating of the statue to nearby GAR Park.

Upon returning to Providence after his 1930 trip to Quebec, Lovecraft undertook his single longest literary work—"A Description of the Town of Quebeck, in New-France, Lately added to His Britannick Majesty's Dominions." The section covering King William's War recounts the story of Haverhill's axe-toting heroine.



C2 - Haverhill City Hall



The parking lot behind Haverhill's City Hall (along Main Street) is the former site of local manufacturer/philanthropist E. J. M. Hale's home. This house became the YMCA where Lovecraft stayed on his visits to Haverhill. Lovecraft, somewhat of a connoisseur of YMCA lodging, did not care for this particular YMCA because the facilities were scattered across several buildings on the estate. The original Hale/YMCA entrance is still marked by the original stone gateposts integrated into the fence along the Main Street side of the parking lot.

The City Hall itself is formerly the High School. Both Walter Gilman of "The Dreams in the Witch House" and Nathaniel Peaslee of *Shadow Out of Time* would have attended school there before they went to Miskatonic University.

C3 - Haverhill Public Library



The library that Lovecraft visited was located on Summer Street and a victim of urban renewal. The current building is a larger if inelegant replacement. The third floor of the building is home to Special Collections, a peerless collection of local history, photographs, and genealogical sources, where, on the rare occasion it is open to the public, visitors can see several copies of Tryout Smith's earlier amateur journal, *The Monthly Visitor*. It is also home to copies of Lord Timothy Dexter's booklet *A Pickle for the Knowing Ones*. Lovecraft owned an 1810 print of Dexter house showing the eccentric's house, surrounded by statues. He visited Dexter's home (by then statue-free) in Newburyport, a stated goal of that first

1923 trip.

D - Water Street

⇒ Return to the car and take a right out of the parking lot onto Stage Street. In 250 feet, Stage Street will end at Ginty Boulevard. Turn left onto Ginty Blvd and proceed 0.4 mile. Merge onto Water Street. In 800 feet, turn into the driveway of the Buttonwoods Museum (Haverhill Historical Society). Proceed past the building to the parking lot behind the building.



D1 - Pentucket Burial Ground

218 Water Street

Established in 1668, Pentucket was the first burial ground of Haverhill and is the final resting place of the city's earliest inhabitants, many of whom still have headstones standing.

Lovecraft visited the cemetery, within easy walking distance of Tryout Smith's home at least once (in 1934). Ostensibly visiting to see the obelisk of Salem Witch Judge Nathaniel Saltonstall, Lovecraft borrowed names off neighboring stones for "The Shadow out of Time," written soon after this visit to Haverhill. The headstone of Nathaniel Peaslee, Jr. (1707–

1730) is a classic example of the Merrimack Valley School of carving, with a distinctive circular face with round eyes, a linear nose, and oblong mouth. Nathaniel Peaslee became the protagonist in the story.

In the same paragraph where Professor Peaslee says he had no interest in the supernatural (before his bout of “amnesia”), Lovecraft mentions the maiden name of Peaslee’s wife – Alice Keezar. Although there is no Alice Keezar buried in Pentucket, there was a flat stone marking the burial of “Sarjant John Keyzar,” killed in 1696/7 during the Indian raid that resulted in the capture of Hannah Duston. Sergeant Keezar was the father of Cobbler John Keezer, immortalized by Whittier in his ballad “Cobbler Keezar’s Vision” (1861). In that poem, the cobbler is transported through time in a mystical vision, paralleling Professor Peaslee’s out-of-body experience and a decidedly literate inside joke.

Entering the cemetery from Water Street, the obelisk is to your left near the edge of the cemetery. Peaslee is buried nearby. The Keyzar stone is currently buried under leaf loam elsewhere on the grounds and considered lost.

D2 - Buttonwoods Museum

Haverhill Historical Society
240 Water Street

The Buttonwoods is a Federal style house, built in 1814 as a wedding gift for Samuel White Duncan by his father. It was donated to the historical society by his descendants and opened as a museum on 30 January 1904, with local historian Leonard Woodman Smith. Smith was still the curator in 1921, leading Lovecraft’s tour of the property in 1921. Lovecraft was impressed with both the aristocratic curator and the collection itself, which he felt reflected the original Duncan family rather than an arbitrarily combined exhibit of pieces without relationship to each other. Admission fee.

D2A- John Ward House

Haverhill Historical Society

At the time of Lovecraft’s visit, the small house on the grounds of the Historical Society was thought to date back to the very founding of Haverhill as the home of Haverhill’s first minister, John Ward, in 1640. It has subsequently been determined that the wooden-framed building was not as old as believed and only dates to 1720. But Lovecraft sounded positively giddy when he wrote his aunt about the oldest house he had ever seen, let alone entered. Limited access via Buttonwoods.



A recurring theme in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* is the scent of old buildings as a warning of proximity to evil. Lovecraft based this on a concept he had about old structures. After a visit to the Paul Revere house in Boston with Edith Miniter in 1923, Lovecraft wrote to Alfred Galpin that he felt that the “odour of them alone is sufficient to awake dark speculation.” And the most pronounced location of this sinister olfactory allurements to Lovecraft was the “antient Ward house in Haverhill, the oldest part of which was built in 1640.”

D3 – Hazen Garrison House

8 Groveland Street

The Hazen-Spiller House is a historic late First Period house, built c. 1724 by Richard Hazen. It was acquired by Wallace Nutting, a minister turned photographer who “restored” the original interiors to a sanitized, inaccurate, but photogenic version of a 1600s colonial house.

In “The Shadow out of Time,” Professor Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee lived in his ancestral family home on Boardman Street on Golden Hill before he moved to Arkham. Although not on Boardman Street as in the story, Boardman Street was so sparsely inhabited that this is the only nearby house that would have appeal to Lovecraft’s antiquarian eye, and Nutting’s prolific marketing of photographic prints, books, and postcards could indicate Lovecraft was already familiar with the building. By Lovecraft’s first visit, the structure was already a private home. It remains a private residence not open to the public. Exterior view only.

⇒ Exit Buttonwoods via back exit. Turn right onto John Ward Ave. Proceed 650 feet and turn left onto Buttonwoods Ave. In 0.2 mile, turn left onto Boardman Street. Proceed 0.1 mile and make a sharp right onto Homer Street. Follow Homer Street to the parking lot of Golden Hill School. Note: Golden Hill School’s mailing address is on Boardman Street. Disregard GPS directions and proceed up Homer Street.

E - Golden Hill

Golden Hill School

During Tryout's life, the Riverside area was the fastest growing section of Haverhill. Trolley lines allowed factory workers to raise families outside the downtown yet still within reach of the factories. There were still farms and open fields, but changes were happening: the new Linwood Cemetery was formerly a large parcel of the Boardman farm, a large land grant that had been in the White-Boardman family since the earliest days of the colony.

Lovecraft and Tryout Smith would have walked up from Groveland Street to reach the scenic vista at the summit of Golden Hill. Rising almost 300 feet, Golden Hill gives an expansive view of the city and the Merrimack River. The walk to the hilltop would be via Boardman Street, a road so familiar to Lovecraft it appears in "The Shadow out of Time."

⇒ Reverse direction on Homer Street back to Boardman Street. Pass Buttonwoods Ave and continue another 800 feet to Golden Hill Ave. Turn left onto Golden Hill Ave. Proceed 0.25 mile to Powder House Ave. Proceed on Powder House Ave for .01 mile. Road is narrow, forested and has a hairpin turn. Use caution.

F - Powder House

Powder House Ave

In Lovecraft's "The Strange High House in the Mist," August Olney seeks in vain to find a path to the Strange House. On one attempt, he passes the "old brick powder-house to where the pastures slope up to the ridge above the Miskatonic and give a lovely vista of Arkham's white Georgian steeples across leagues of river and meadow." Although this is a picture-perfect description of the view from Powder House Ave as Lovecraft would have seen it, the story, set in Kingsport, describes the powder house in Marblehead, Kingsport's inspiration. The story was written in November 1926, and although Lovecraft had visited Haverhill twice in 1921 and again 1923, his most extensive explorations of Golden Hill would wait until his 1931 and 1934 visit.

⇒ Continue on Powder House Ave. In 0.3 mile turn left on to Judson Street. Proceed 300 feet to Linwood Street. Turn right on to Linwood. In 200 feet, turn left onto Groveland Street. Proceed 0.5 mile. The former location of Tryout Smith's house will be on the left.

G - 408 Groveland Street (destroyed)

From 1904 to his death in 1948, Charles W. Smith lived at 408 Groveland – with only brief interruption. It was there that he printed the *Tryout* on his trusty hand press, first in a shed behind the house, and in his bedroom at the end of the publication's run. The house was destroyed by fire in October 1998, and a new colonial-style house was built in its place. Aside from the street address, the building has no association with Lovecraft or Tryout Smith. Exterior view only—it is a private residence not open to the public.

⇒ Reverse direction on Groveland Street. In 1.2 miles, merge onto Water Street. Continue on Water Street for .03 mile to intersection with Mill Street. Bear left (turn only lane) and continue in Water Street for another .02 mile.

H - Water Street Fire Station

131 Water Street



A small disc marking the high water crest of the Great Flood of 1936 is on the outside of the station on the exterior wall facing the river.

Lovecraft's letters note his concern for Tryout Smith during the flood. That concern was justified; the river crested at thirty feet, and Smith's home barely missing the section of Groveland St.

⇒ Continue west on Water Street for 0.2 mile. Cross Main Street onto Merrimack Street. In 0.3 mile, Merrimack Street becomes Washington Street at Washington Square. Proceed down Washington Street for 0.2 mile. Pass under the railroad bridge and make the first right into the train station parking lot.

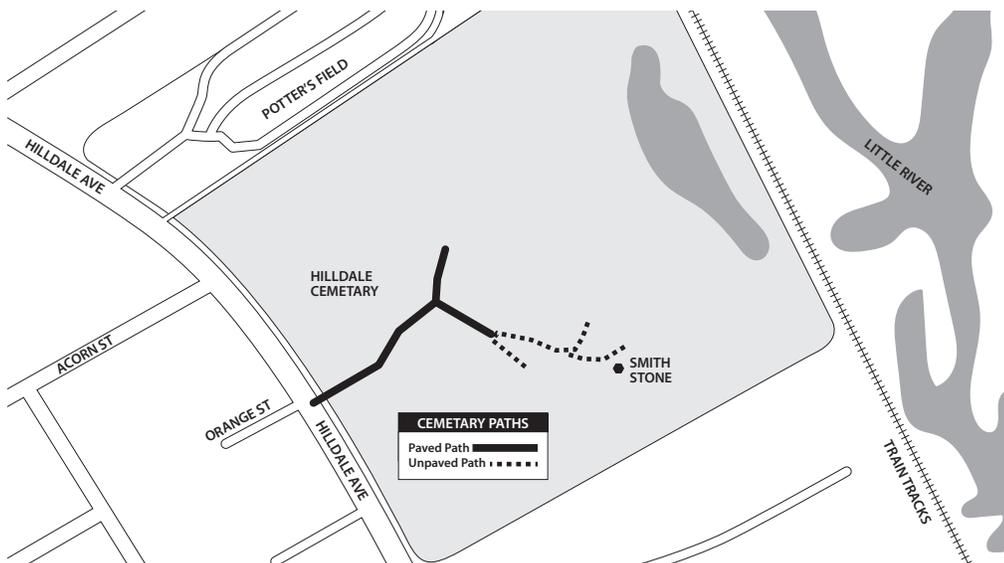
I - Washington Street

J - Railroad Square

The shoe factories of Washington Street were among 10 acres of buildings destroyed by fire in February 1882. By October, most of the street had been rebuilt, giving rise to a street lined with Queen Anne panel-brick design industrial architecture, similar but with the individual touches and varied façades typical of the Queen Anne style. In 1976, the area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of the finest examples of such surviving in America.

Arriving by train, Lovecraft's first glimpse of Haverhill would be from the railroad bridge. Leaving Railroad Square he would find himself at the start of historic Washington Street, with retail at street level and the shoe industry on upper floors. His ongoing search for back issues of the Old Farmer's Almanac may have enticed him to stroll down the street to the various bookstores on Washington and Merrimack streets while waiting for the electric trolleys in Washington Square heading to Merrimac.

⇒ Reverse direction back onto Washington St. and turn left after passing under the railroad bridge. Proceed 0.2 mile to Essex Street. The street will change names from Railroad Square to Garner Way to Moulton Way. Turn left onto Essex Street. Proceed 0.1 mile to Lafayette Square, bearing left at the light (turn only lane). Pass through Lafayette Square. At the next traffic light in 500 feet, bear right onto Hilldale Avenue. Proceed 0.8 mile to Hilldale Cemetery.



K - Hilldale Cemetery

337 Hilldale Avenue

The cemetery on Hilldale Avenue at one time was the grandest and most active cemetery in the city. After decades of neglect, the cemetery is carefully being restored, but it remains a formidable task for the volunteer crews undoing the damage. Records were maintained just as poorly, so in addition to the new stone marking Tryout, his parents and his daughter, there are at least two unconfirmed family members in the plot, Daniel's sister and her husband. Tryout's older daughter Susan is buried with her husband, Charles Britton in a nearby plot. Between the two plots, there are another six family members unaccounted for in burial records who may or may not be buried with the families.

Until 2018, the only stone marking the family plot was a government-issued Civil War marker for Tryout's father Daniel. There is no record of any other markers. This may indicate the blue-collar family simply couldn't afford a stone. When Ida, Tryout's wife, died in 1885 at 33, she was buried with her family in another cemetery – there was no money for a plot or stone in the budget of a widowed box maker suddenly raising two small children and supporting his widowed mother.

⇒ Continue on Hilldale Ave for 0.4 mile. Turn left onto Monument Street. Proceed 0.7 mile to the intersection of Broadway. Turn right for the onramp to I-495 South (exit 50). Proceed straight through the traffic light for I-495 North. Tour End.

Sidetrips

These local landmarks have a minor association with Lovecraft's visits, but not enough to include on the main driving tour.

Haverhill Country Club

58 Brickett Lane

⇒ To add to the drive, depart Winnekenni Castle and turn left onto Kenoza Ave. In 0.2 mile turn on to Concord Street. Proceed 1.8 miles on Concord. Turn right on North Street. Proceed 0.3 mile to Brickett Lane.

Lovecraft hypothesized that Haverhill's rapid industrialization came at the cost of its colonial neighborhoods and that the city compensated for that loss by erecting buildings in medieval styles. He specifically noted Winnekenni Castle and another building he saw under construction en route to Myrta Little's home in Hampstead, NH, a "Gothic monastery" that would be the new country club's clubhouse. Lovecraft was correct in the Gothic lines, although the finished building was not a monastery but an English Tudor half-timber manor house. The Haverhill Golf and Country Club still has a clubhouse overlooking the links, but it is not the same building that Lovecraft noted. It was rebuilt after a 1960 fire with the express intention of giving the new building a decidedly 60s interpretation of the exterior - evocative but by no stretch identical to the original building's Tudor styling.

Duston Garrison House

655 Hilldale Ave



⇒ To add to the drive, depart Hilldale Cemetery and continue on Hilldale Ave for one mile.

Lovecraft was familiar with Haverhill's hatchet-wielding folk-hero, captured while this house was still under construction. At the time of his visits, the property was still a private residence. It was not turned into a shrine until the Duston-Dustin Association purchased it in 1946. Open for tours by appointment only.

Hannah Duston Park

130 Monument Street



⇒ The boulder is on the route from Hilldale Cemetery back to I-495. It is 0.3 mile from the intersection with Hilldale Ave, next to Hannah Duston Healthcare Center.

Located across from the high school, Hannah Duston Park is a 30-ton glacial erratic boulder that marks the home of her son Jonathan. Hannah spent her last years living here with her. Hannah died in the house and was probably buried nearby.



The Tryout Smith Monument Project

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