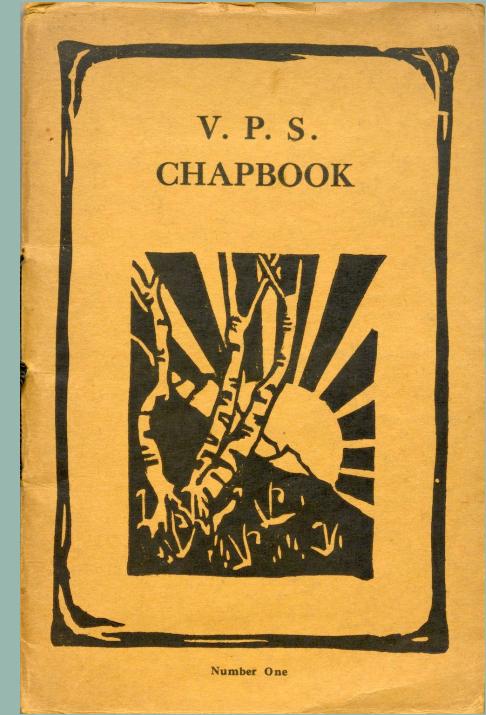


# “The Artist and Craftsman at Hand”

Janet Eaves and the Creation of Canada’s  
‘First’ Poetry Chapbook

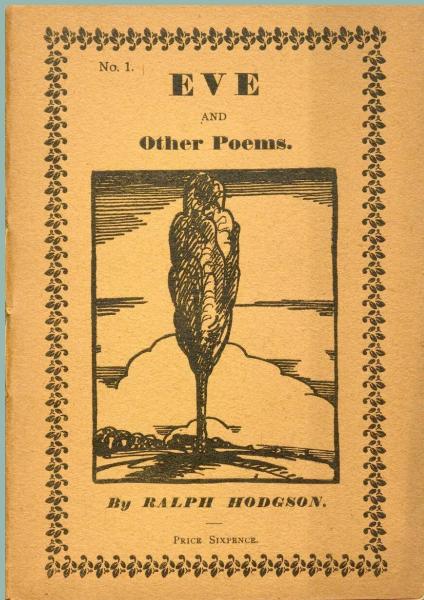


Grant Hurley Canadiana Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library  
Bibliographical Society of Canada 2023 Conference | May 29, 2023



# Setting the Scene

# January 31, 1925: 2590 West 5th Avenue, Vancouver



Ralph Hodgson, *Eve and Other Poems* (London: Sign of the Flying Fame, 1913)

- Janet Eaves (Goodall) gives a lecture titled “Chap Books and Broadsheets,” introduces the work of Claud Lovat Fraser, and passes around examples from Harold Monro’s Poetry Bookshop of London.
- “Mrs. Goodall then outlined a scheme for the consideration of those present for the periodic publication by this society of a Chap Book containing selected poems from the work of the members. She volunteered to make the drawings for the necessary wood-cuts.”

(VPS fonds, 526-D-3-5)

“The President declared that he distinctly remembered the 16th Century poems of the Berkshire Poetry Society sold by a peddler at the backdoor of his Grandfather’s Baronial Hall. Instantly the idea impregnated the air - if then, why not now? If the B.P.S. - why not the V.P.S? Obviously no reason why not, provided the material, the Artist, and the Craftsman, were at hand. Certainly there were **poems by the members**, an **Artist in the person of Mrs. Goodall** and a **Craftsman in the person of Mr. Bradbury.**”

(VPS fonds, 526-D-3-7)

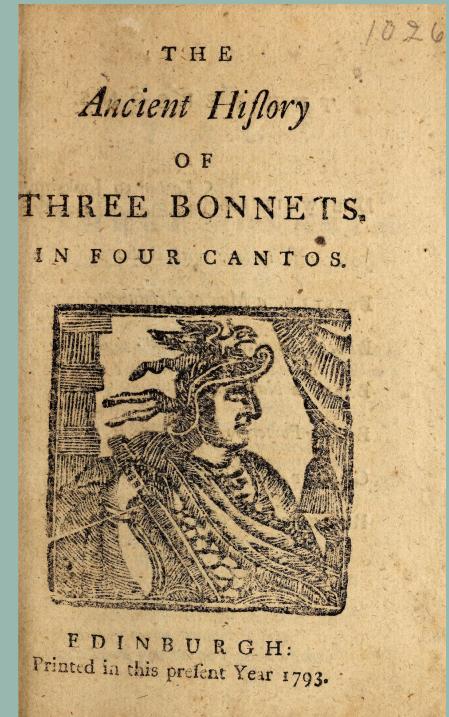


Kate Eastman and Ernest Fewster looking from the window of 2590 West 5th Avenue.

Kate Eastman fonds, Rare Books and Special Collections Library, University of British Columbia, BC 1909-13.

# Chapbooks and their ‘revival’

- Chapbooks made starting in the late 17th century descended from a longer tradition of broadsheets and broadsides.
- They were printed quickly and cheaply as entertainment for the literate masses, and contained folklore and ballads to salacious tales of murders and executions and nursery rhymes.
- Sold on the streets by peddlers called “chapmen.”

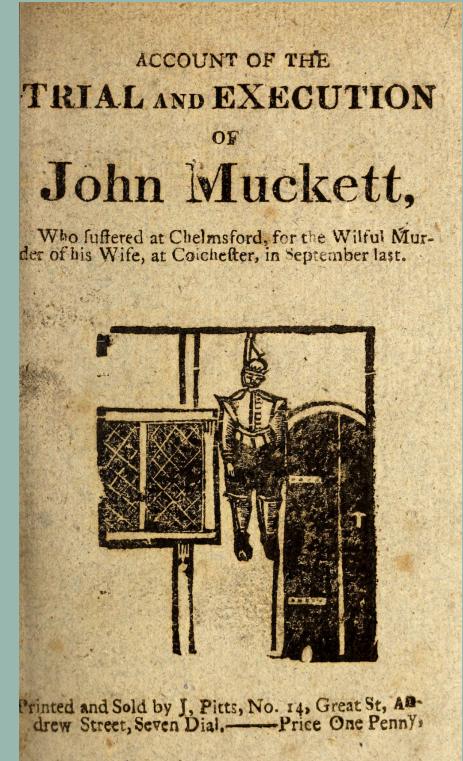


*The Ancient History of Three Bonnets.*  
(Edinburgh: s.n., 1793)

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

# Chapbooks and their ‘revival’

- Reached their apex in early 19th century before decline in England during the 1830s-1850s due to the banning of street hawking and the lifting of a newspaper tax in 1855, which led to ‘penny dailies.’
- No comparable tradition in Canada during the 18th and 19th centuries, but some popular broadsides/sheets, handbills, and almanacs were printed in addition to an active periodical press.



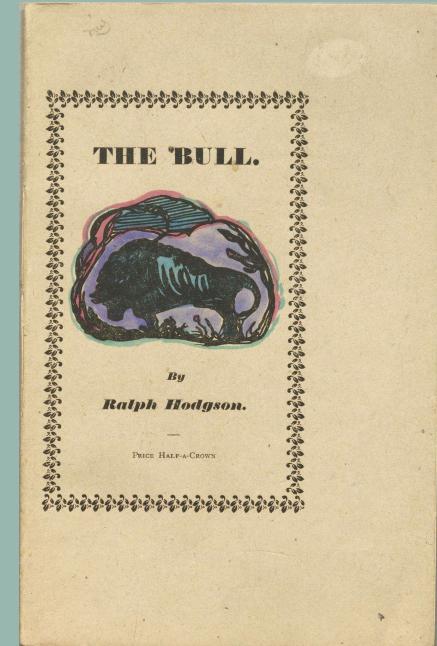
*Account of the Trial and Execution of John Muckett* (London: J. Pitts, c. 1807)

# Chapbooks and their ‘revival’

- A revival of the chapbook form and format was soon to come:

“In the brief period between their virtual demise and their ‘rediscovery’ as icons of a ‘bygone age’ in the 1880s, their slipshod printing had become ‘characterful,’ typographical naivety ‘quaint,’ and the roughly hewn woodcut illustrations ... had transformed into a celebration of a more innocent, even carefree idyll of pre-industrial rural life.”

(David Jury, p. 15)



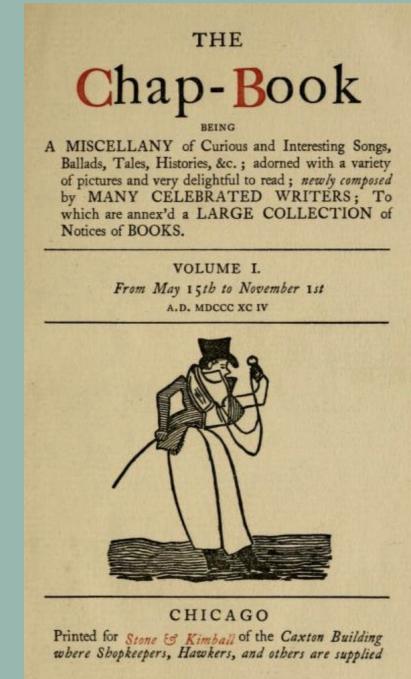
Ralph Hodgson, *The Bull*  
(London: Flying Fame, 1913)

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# Chapbooks and their ‘revival’

Eli MacLaren identifies the 1890s as a site of shifting terminology, where the word “chapbook” was revived via Arts and Crafts-driven fin-de-siècle little magazines such as Herbert Stone and Hannibal Kimball’s *The Chap-Book* and the work of Claud Lovat Fraser:

“In its modern sense, it is an appurtenance of the aspiring author - a small book written and designed to artistic standards, printed by the author at personal expense, bound cheaply, and all produced outside the mainstream commercial book trade” (p. 44).



First issue of *The Chap-Book* (1894)

[Internet Archive](#)

# Claud Lovat Fraser (1890-1921)

- English designer, artist and illustrator and authority on 17th and 18th century broadsides.
- Established The Sign of the Flying Fame with poet Ralph Hodgson and writer/publisher Holbrook Jackson and printer A.T. Stephens in 1913 to produce chapbooks and broadsides accessible to the public.
- Also produced designs for Harold Monro's Poetry Bookshop and the Curwen Press.
- “Lovat’s devotion to these simple little books ... was all-consuming” (David Jury, p. 15).



Claud Lovat Fraser, 1913.

# Chapbooks and their ‘revival’

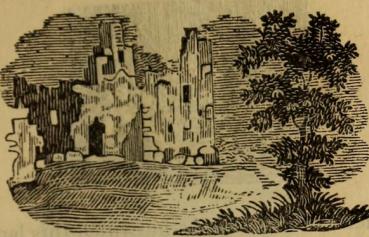
2



Now shall my pretty Albert ride,  
And Henry too shall go astride ;  
The little dog shall run one side,  
And puss shall go on t'other :  
And Adelaide shall have a walk,  
And baby too, o'er hill of chalk,  
And guile the road in pleasant talk,  
To see their kind grandmother.

Now see-saw, my Margery-daw,  
Jenny shall have a new master ;  
She'll have but a penny a day,  
Because she can work no faster.

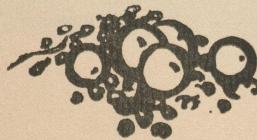
3



King Pippin built a fine new hall,  
Pastry and pie-crust were the wall ;  
Windows made of black puddings and  
white,  
Slates were pancakes, you ne'er saw the  
like.

Now make a nice bun, my baker's man,  
A Banbury Cake, fast as you can ;  
Currants and sugar, mark it with T,  
Then bring it home, to Tommy and me.

A LL things I'll give you  
Will you be my guest,  
Bells for your jennet  
Of silver the best,  
Goldsmiths shall beat you  
A great golden ring,  
Peacocks shall bow to you,  
Little boys sing,  
Oh, and sweet girls will  
Festoon you with may,  
Time, you old gipsy,  
Why hasten awa y?



6



L AST week in Babylon,  
Last night in Rome,  
Morning, and in the crush  
Under Paul's dome ;  
Under Paul's dial  
You tighten your rein—  
Only a moment,  
And off once again ;  
Off to some city  
Now blind in the womb,  
Off to another  
Ere that's in the tomb.



7

*Nursery Rhymes from the Royal Collections* (Banbury: J. Rusher, c. 1830-40)

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

Ralph Hodgson, *Eve and Other Poems* (London: Sign of the Flying Fame, 1913)

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library



# Cast of Characters

# The Artist: Janet Eaves (1880-1969)

- Immigrated to British Columbia from England in 1911.
- Married Aubrey Goodall in 1914 and established a home in Burnaby.
  - Continued to work professionally using her original name.
  - Also used the name “Joan Goodall.”
- Worked as an art teacher at the Guelph School for Girls and partnered with Charles Ferguson as a commercial artist in the early 1900s.



Janet Eaves, 1918.

Gary Sim - [British Columbia Artists](#)

# The Craftsman: Charles Bradbury (1871-1950)

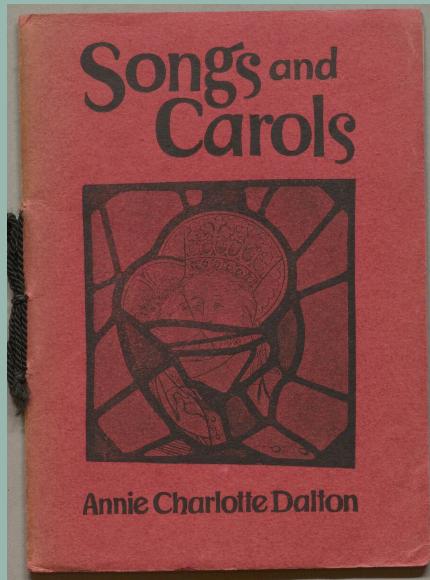
- Born in Staffordshire, England and immigrated to British Columbia via Borneo in 1888.
- Married Dorothy Allison in 1907.
- Worked as a telegraph operator from 1922 to about 1935, and possibly as a professional photographer for an unknown period during this time.



Charles Bradbury photo, [Teacher Dorothy Allison and students in classroom of Model School]

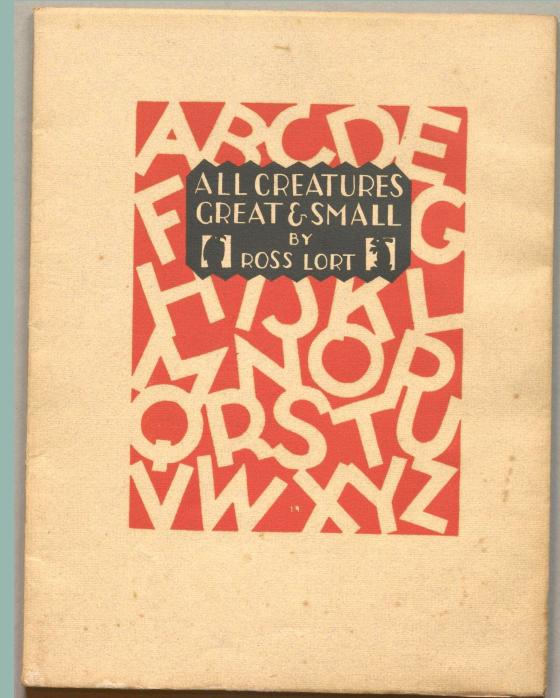
# Charles Bradbury as printer

- Later described by Eaves as an “a clever amateur printer with a handpress.”  
(VPS fonds 526-E-1-1)
- Printed four known items:
  - *Three Poems* (1925) chapbook + at least one prospectus/order sheet
  - Annie Charlotte Dalton’s *Songs and Carols* (1925)
  - Ross Lort’s *All Creatures Great & Small* (1931)



Annie Charlotte Dalton, *Songs and Carols* (Vancouver: C.B. at the Sign of the Raven, 1925)

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library



Ross Lort, *All Creatures Great & Small* (Vancouver: Printed on the private Press of Charles Bradbury, 1931)

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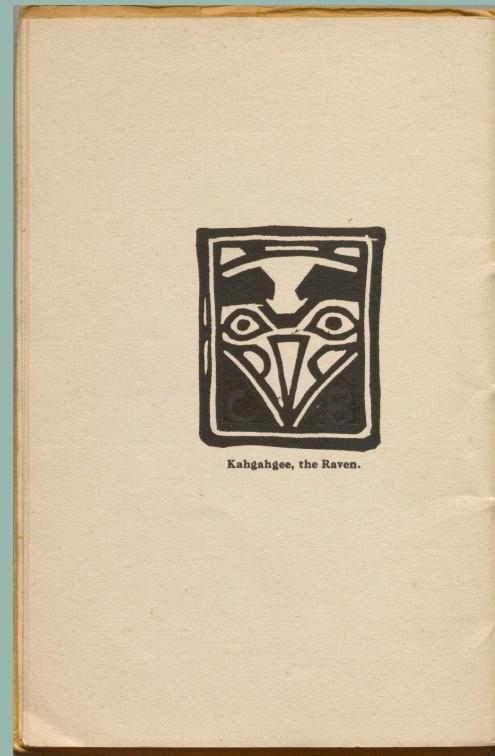
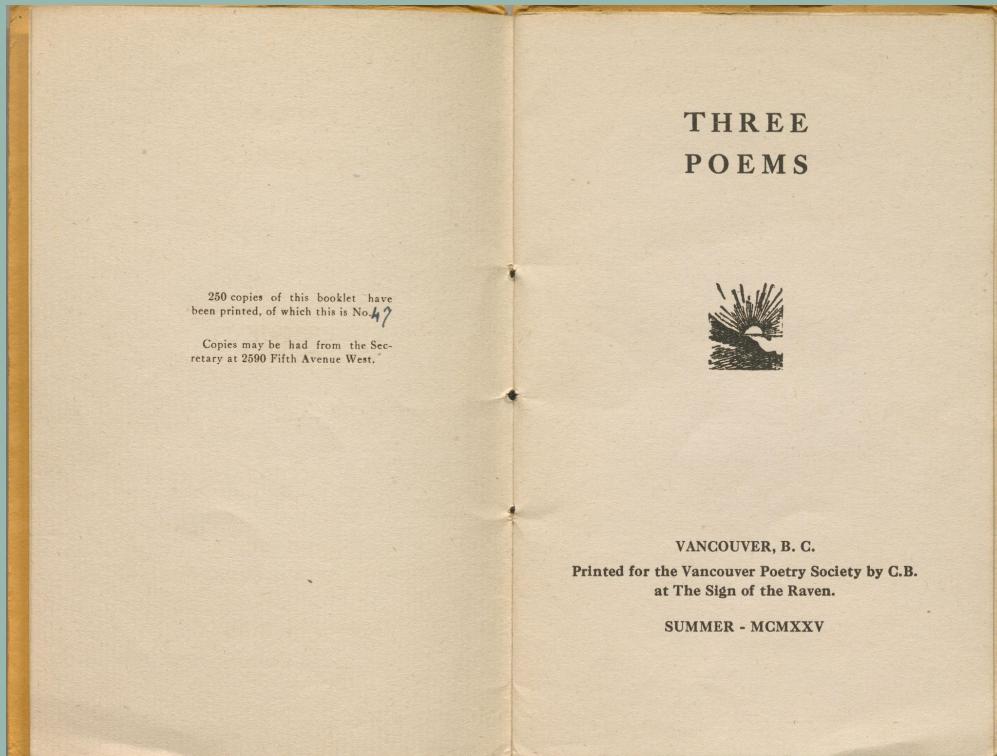
# The Poets: The Vancouver Poetry Society (1916-1974)

- Founded in 1916 by Dr. Ernest Fewster, who served as President until 1947.
- Cultivated active relationships, and were frequently visited by, “eastern” literary figures such as Charles G.D. Roberts, Bliss Carman and Lorne Pierce.
- Included more ‘modernist’ poets Dorothy Livesay, Al Purdy and Patricia Lowther in its later years.
- Published ‘little magazine’ *Full Tide* 1936-1974.
- Society history *A Book of Days* published by Ryerson in 1946.



VPS group photo by George T. Wadds: l-r, Bliss Carman, Charles G.D. Roberts, Annie Charlotte Dalton, Lorne Pierce, Ernest Fewster, A.M. Stephen.

# The VPS Chapbook: *Three Poems* (1925)



## *Three Poems* (1925)

- 16 leaves, 18.9 cm x 12.1 cm.
- Printed in an edition of 250 copies “by C.B. at the Sign of the Raven.”
- Sold for 60 cents, with hand-coloured option for \$1.00.
- No watermark, some or all copies printed on Van Gelder paper.
- Caslon type used; likely set from linotype.
- 23 interior linocuts by Janet Eaves + 2 for the cover and likely the printer’s device.
- Finished in September-October 1925 with October 15, 1925 being recorded in one source. (VPS fonds, 526-E-1)

# *Three Poems (1925)*

## THE SPAN



Love touched my life with dreaming,  
My heart with fire;  
My lips drank deep of his fragrant wine,  
His great desire.  
Creation flashed on my spirit—  
My kingdom gained  
I reigned.



## THE SPAN



Years smote my heart with winter,  
My nerves with rust;  
They touched my ears with silence,  
My wine with must.  
Death prest to my lips the poppy-head;  
Tasting I wept  
And slept.



## ON THE HEIGHTS



Love that would linger,  
Twilight is gray.  
Leave me my cliff-top,  
Golden with day.



## ON THE HEIGHTS

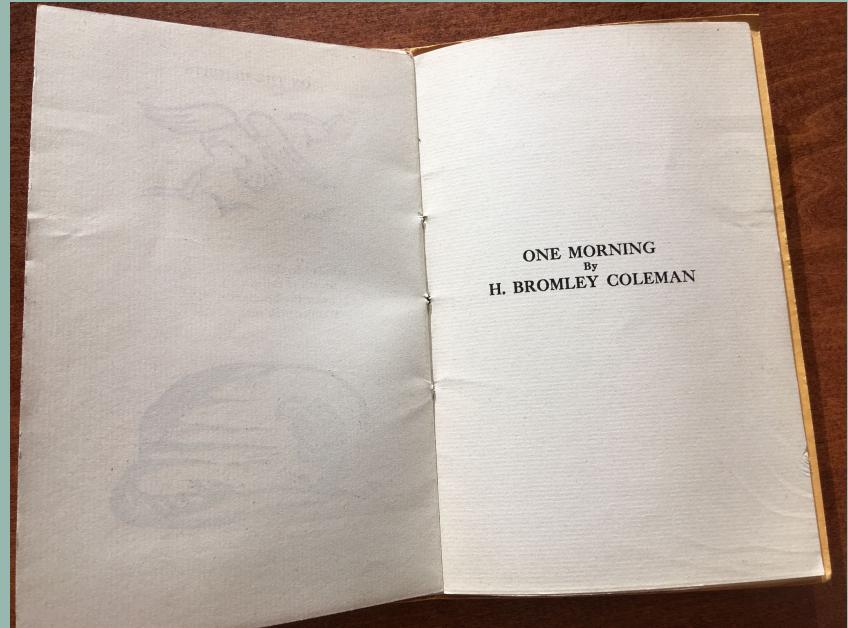


Wind of forthgoing,  
Breath of the sea,  
Lone on the headlands,  
Wander with me.

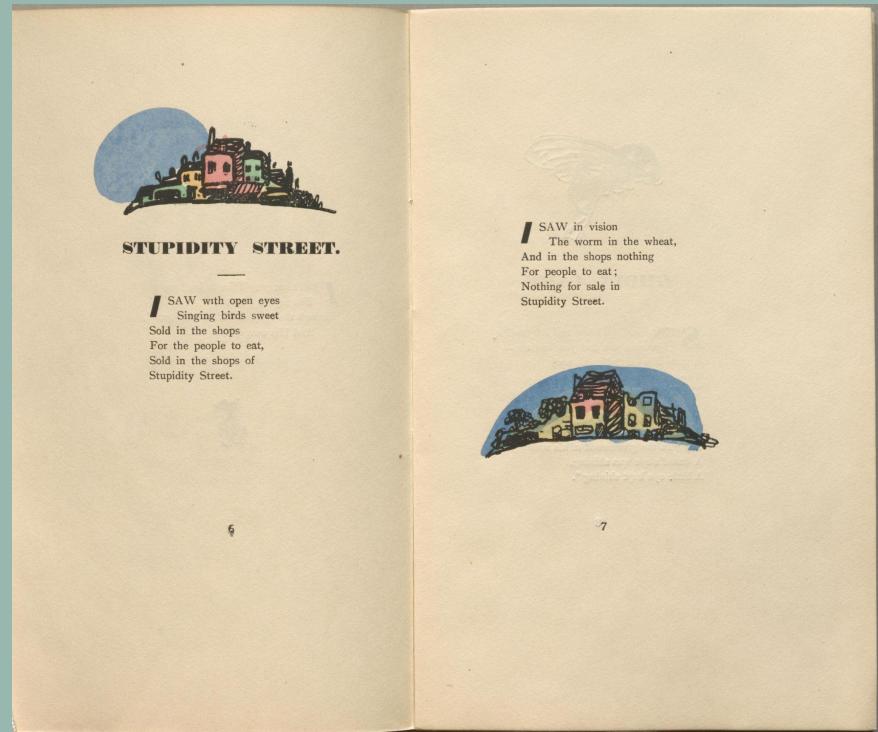
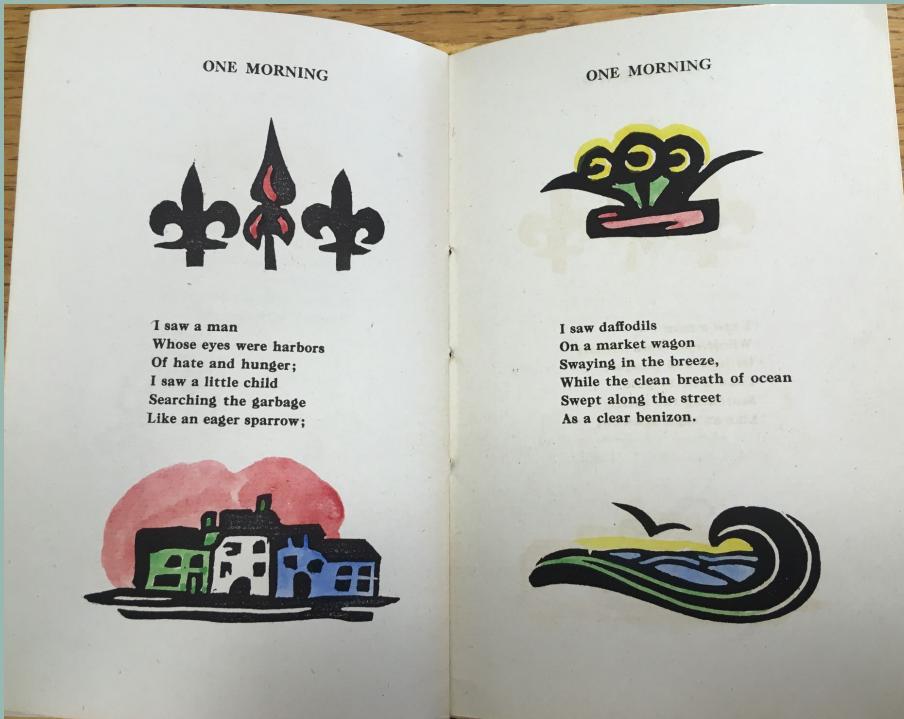


# The Three Poems

- “The Span” by Ernest Fewster
- “On the Heights” by A.M. Stephen
- “One Morning” by H. Bromley Coleman



# Debt to Claud Lovat Fraser





# The Production

# Printing the Chapbook

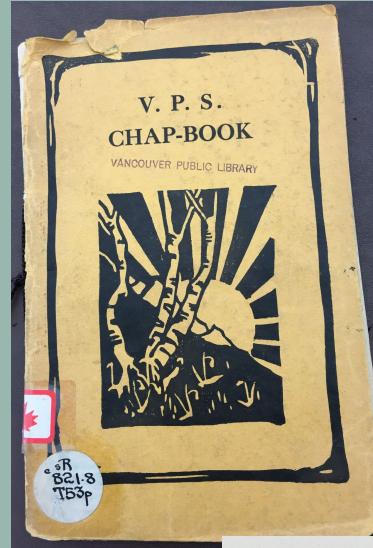
- Cost estimated at \$26; funds collected from VPS members March 1925; possible actual cost was \$36.
- Work paused in April 1925 due to illness of Charles Bradbury.
- Eaves and Bradbury restarted Summer or Fall of 1925:
  - Janet Eaves, undated 1925 letter: “It seems funny starting an idea in concrete form so long after the first enthusiasm has passed, & I shall not believe anything until it is actually ready for binding!” (VPS fonds, 526-E-1-1)
- Eaves and Bradbury collaborated closely on all aspects of its production:
  - Janet Eaves, September [1925]: “It was such a labour getting the Chapbook into shape & I had so often to run into town about the setting up of the pages. Mr. Bradbury has taken endless pains & is I think you will agree, a beautiful craftsman & printer.” (VPS fonds, 526-E-1-1)
- Efforts for issue #2 initiated in 1926, but further illness on the part of both Eaves and Bradbury, and Eaves’ temporary move to England in 1926 caused the project to stop.

# Printing the Chapbook

Janet Eaves, 1957 letter: "I was very busy after getting it out with Charles Bradbury, whose labour of love in producing it & getting every detail of spacing & type etc. as harmonious in style as he could with his handpress, deserves to be remembered. Busy with a small daughter & miniature farm yard etc. I was seldom able to get into V.P.S. meetings, & early next year there was a flu epidemic during which I drove into my last regular meeting at 2590, driving home with difficulty having contracted the germ, & next morning came down with what later proved to be the meningital flu. This incapacitated me so badly that I could not take any interest in V.P.S." (VPS fonds, 526-E-1)

# Variants

- Vancouver Public Library copy cover spelling “Chap-Book” and missing “Number One” at bottom.
- Printer’s device missing phrase “Kahgahgee, the Raven.” in UBC and LAC copies.
- Printer’s device possible overprinting hiding initials “C.B.” inconsistent between copies.



Kahgahgee, the Raven.



End Scene:

Situating the Chapbook  
(and questions of its ‘firstness’)

# The first?

**Charles Bradbury (to W.G. Stephen, 13 January 1926):** “I believe the Ryerson Press have got out a Chapbook ... But I believe ours is the first.” (VPS fonds, 526-E-1-1)

**VPS, *Full Tide* issue 1.1 (1936):** The Ryerson Chap-Book series was modeled on the VPS chapbook “after a courteous request by the firm” (p. 2).

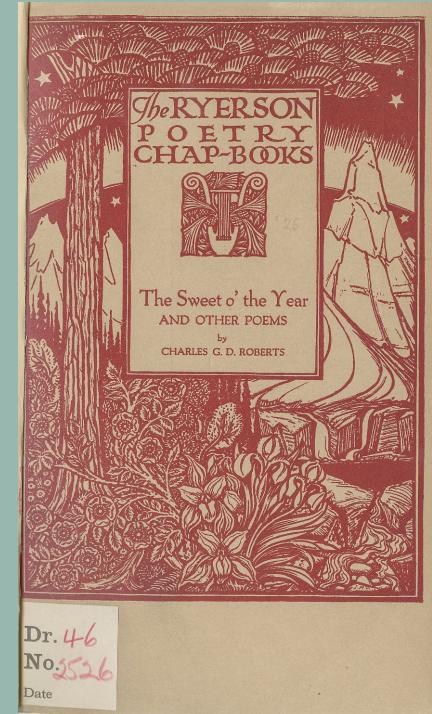
**A Book of Days:** “A tradition of the Society, later recorded in print by A.M. Stephen, is that ‘Dr. Lorne Pierce caught the idea of printing chapbooks while on a visit to Vancouver; he saw the possibilities embodied in this first Canadian chapbook’” (p. 22).

# The first?

Hurley, 2012: “a production that was the first of its kind in Canada” (p. 22).

Eli MacLaren, 2013: “*Three Poems* was not the first Canadian chapbook” (p. 14).

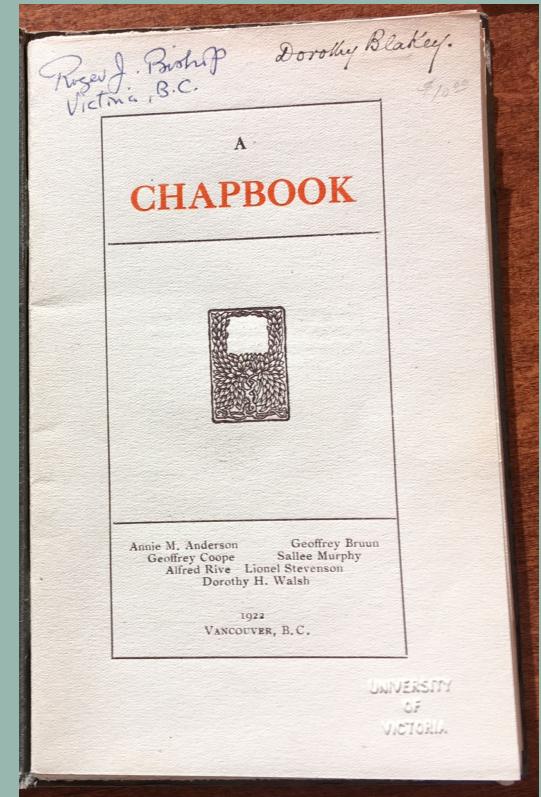
- Not the first to use the term “chapbook” in a Canadian publication.
- Ryerson Press published the first number of its Chap-Book series in November 1925 and there is no evidence that *Three Poems* specifically informed it.



Charles G.D. Roberts, *The Sweet o' the Year and Other Poems* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1925)

# One predecessor

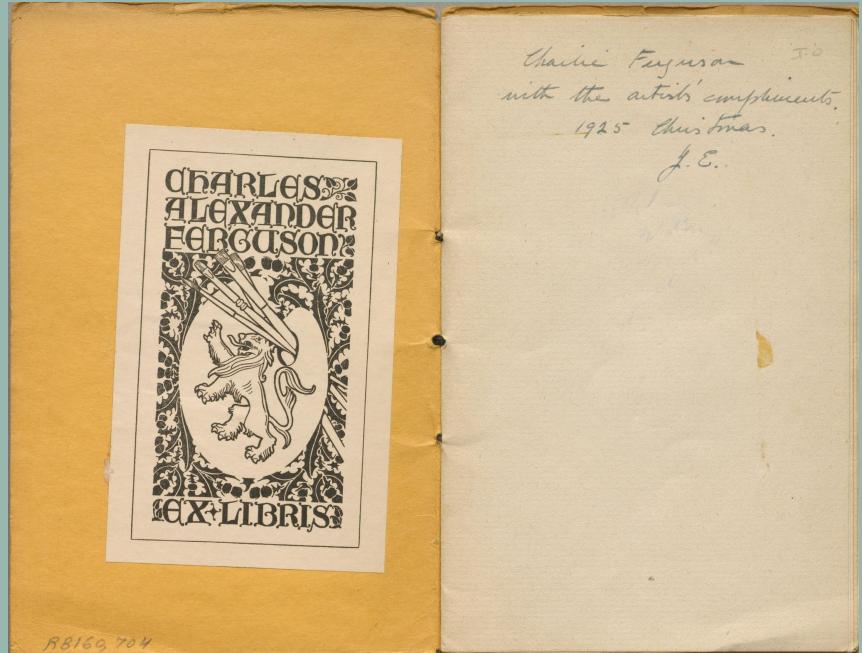
- *A Chapbook* (1922) self-published by 7 students at UBC, including 3 VPS members.
- 200 copies printed (likely by local firm) via subscription.
- Goes unmentioned in VPS records, but members were likely aware of it.



# Meaning of ‘first’

VPS members were rhetorically invested in *Three Poems* as the ‘first chapbook’ in two key senses:

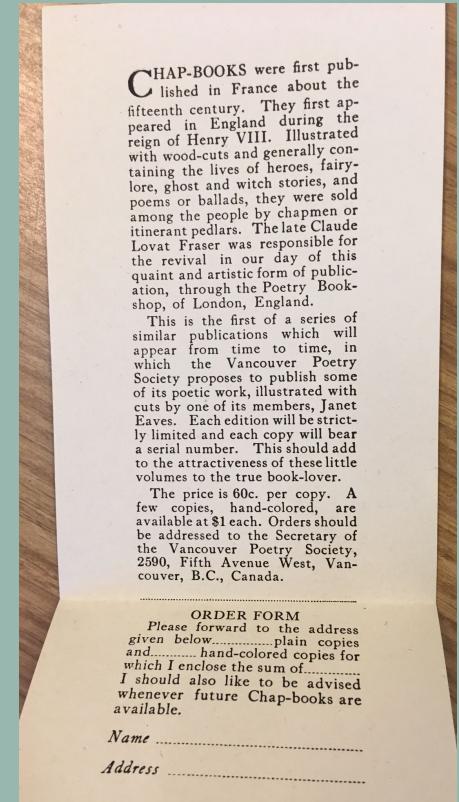
- Its physical production and aesthetic values as grounded in the Arts and Crafts movement.
- The VPS leadership’s self-conception as the source of a new “Western movement” in Canadian poetry that joined traditional poetic forms with spiritual insight.



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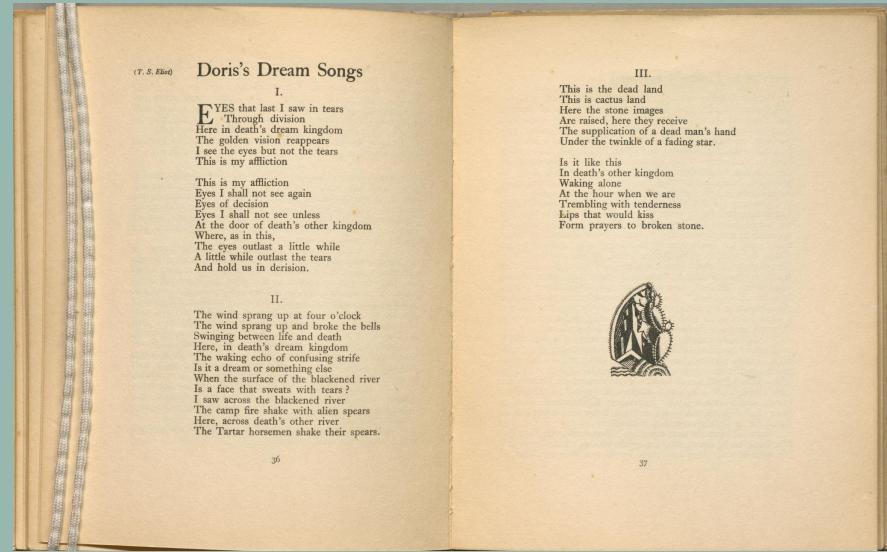
# Meaning of ‘first’ - Arts and Crafts

- A direct connection with the early period of chapbooks, and then Fraser and their revival, is in the prospectus for *Three Poems*:
  - “The late Claude Lovat Fraser was responsible for the revival in our day of this quaint and artistic form of publication...”
- Janet Eaves: “I think art & handicrafts (poetry & drawings) should work together - I have no desire; fact should sharply object to making anything out of it myself, my one wish is that any surplus cash be put into producing as beautiful a piece of handiwork as possible, as some way to encourage Arts & Crafts.” (VPS fonds, 526-E-1-1)



# Meaning of ‘first’ - Arts and Crafts

- Eaves modeled her design after Fraser’s earlier work in comparison with the more ‘modern’ examples of the Poetry Bookshop from the 1920s.
- “First” in this context means that it was understood as an exemplar of a handmade, artistic work upholding Arts and Crafts ideals.

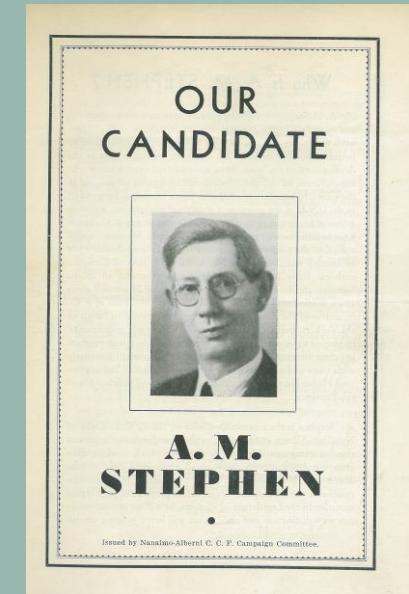


*The Chapbook* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1924)

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# Meaning of ‘first’ - Western Movement

- A.M. Stephen’s 1925 paper “The Western Movement in Canadian Poetry” argued for British Columbia as a site of a new “virile” literary nationalism in contrast to Ontario, Quebec and the United States (p. 212, 213).
- VPS leadership saw Western poets as embodying deeper, Theosophy-tinged “eternal verities” of “mystic vision” in contrast to the spiritual emptiness of literary modernism (p. 212).
- Stephen’s vision for this movement was that it was destined become national in scope.

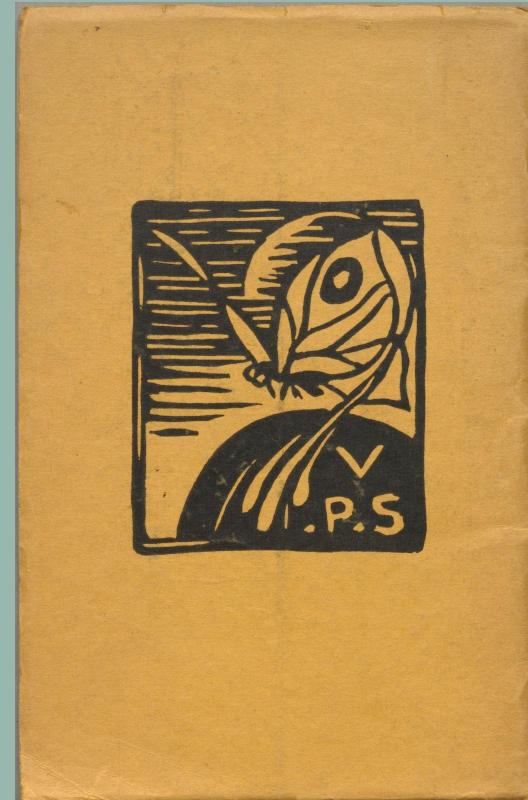


A.M. Stephen, 1937.

[ABC Bookworld](#)

# What makes *Three Poems* significant?

- An early example of a book self-consciously handmade in collaboration between an artist, authors and printer in the tradition of the private press.
- Its publication marked a key moment of creation in the continuing story of Canadian fine/private press printing.



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# Acknowledgements

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# Citations

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